

Theology vol 62.

AN
INTRODUCTORY
DISCOURSE

TO THE
TREMENDOUS SANCTION
IMPARTIALLY DEBATED,
PRINCIPALLY,
And with undissembled HUMILITY, addressed
to the serious ATTENTION of the
GRAND COUNCIL of the NATION;

CONTAINING,
Amongst several other INTERESTING SUBJECTS,
An INQUIRY into the REAL CAUSES of the late
Rapid Progress of PROFANENESS and IMMORALITY;
And pointing out such REMEDIES for the
Suppression of NATIONAL IMPIETIES, as the
Author, with great Submission, is willing to
hope may not be altogether unworthy the
Notice of the RULING POWERS in
CHURCH and STATE.

By JOHN MAUD, A. M. *k*
Vicar of St Neot's in *Huntingdonshire*, and
Chaplain to His Grace the Duke of *Manchester*.

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8. Moral Med.

DISGOURSE INTRODUCTORY A N

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IMPARTIALLY DEBATED
PRINCIPALLY

And with undiminished Humility, addressed
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Amongst several other important Subjects
AN INQUIRY into the Causes of the late
Rapid Progress of Poverty, and Immorality,
And pointing out such REMEDIES for the
Suppression of NATIONAL IMPURITY, as the
Author, with great Submission, is willing to
propose may not be altogether unworthy the
Notice of the Ruling Powers in
Church and State.

By JOHN MAUD, A.M.

Vicar of St. Mary's in Whittington, and
Chaplain to His Grace the Duke of Manchester.

L O N D O N :

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W. ... at ...
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INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

IT has all along been a Kind of Common-Place Custom with most Writers upon grave Subjects, to usher their Works into the World by loudly declaiming against the Vices of the Times they respectively lived in. The Impieties of the Age, and the Depravity of human Nature, has been the bitter Outcry ever since human Nature lost her Innocence. And tho' little Doubt can be made, but that these venerable Advocates of Religion had, what appeared to themselves, Foundation sufficient for lamenting the Fooleries and Vices of their own Times; yet the very same Thing

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so often repeated, and as it were mechanically echoed down from one Writer to another, has unhappily given a Handle to the ludicrous Enemies of Religion, to sneer at every Attempt to reform the Manners of the World, if such an Attempt, though in itself ever so well meant, be ushered in by any the least seeming Invectives against the present Times. For, say these Scoffers at Religion,—“What, the
 “old Story again? Can’t these mighty Re-
 “formers endeavour to amend the Times
 “without Satire and Ill-Nature, and making
 “the present Age worse than all that are past?” And I must needs confess, that the Method of those Writers, who preface their pious Works with bitter Outcries against their own Times, as if those Times were more iniquitous than former Ages, may, by the Enemies of Religion, be construed to proceed from the Censoriousness of the Writer, rather than from a sincere Desire to reform the Degeneracy complained of. Invectives generally exasperate more than they reclaim: And though Satire well pointed, and untinctured with Gall, may shame the young Offender, and cure the Foibles and lesser Vices of Mankind, still nothing can alarm the old Veteran in Iniquity, but the
 “*Man that sits upon the pale Horse.” The justest Satire that ever dropt from Pen, can’t raise one modest Blush in the Cheeks of the confirmed Sinner. This would be a Token of that

* Vide *Apocal. Johan.* Chap. IV. Ver. 8.

that inward Conviction and Self-Condemnation, not to be soon expected from those Men who deem it Wit to *make a Mock at Sin*, and to join the impious Laugh at the Man who pretends to censure and condemn the Vices of this refined Age. 'Tis this growing Politeness, and prevailing Taste of laughing at Religion, and sneering at every laudible Endeavour to promote the sinking Interest of Virtue, that almost strikes the Advocates of Virtue dumb. For till the World is better disposed to be grave and serious, what is to be done? To paint Mens Vices in their true Colours, is deemed Rudeness and Calumny; and to draw out Virtue in her pure native attracting Charms, is nicknamed by the little dapper Witlings of the Age (hopeful, numerous Tribe!) Bigotry, Cant, Design, Weakness, Folly, and a thousand other reproachful Titles. But these Titles being quite opposite in their Nature, they must of Consequence be incompatible one with another. For if it be Weakness and Folly to stand up in the Cause of Virtue, how can it be Cunning and Design at the same Time? As therefore one of these ignominious Titles must be false, I imagine it is a fair Presumption with all unprejudiced Men, that the other may be so to. But if neither the natural Deformity of Vice, nor the ever blooming Beauties of Virtue, can prevail with unthinking Man to reject the one, and embrace the other; if neither that Misery inseparably annexed to a vicious

dissolute Life in this World, nor the temporal Rewards generally attending the Practice of Virtue; if all these Arguments together won't bear the public Advocate for Religion out, what other Arguments can be devised to prevail with the World to reflect and be wise? None, that I know of, but those future eternal Sanctions which the Light of Reason suggests, and which Revelation speaks out more aloud. For as to any temporal Sanctions, whether such as are in the Power of the State, or such as are, in the Nature of Things, generally attendant upon the Practice of Virtue and Vice; these have never been sufficient, in any Age or Country, to secure a due Reverence and Veneration to the Laws of Morality and right Reason. Neither indeed is it, as a * Writer of the first Class with great Propriety observes, in the Power of any State so to distribute Rewards and Punishments, as to bear a due Proportion to the Merits and Demerits of the respective Objects of these human Sanctions. For as it would be utterly impracticable for the most opulent State that ever existed, to raise a Fund sufficient to reward every individual Object according to its peculiar private Merit, so there are ten thousand Vices of which human Laws cannot take Cognizance. How many notorious Crimes are there, which in their Consequence are greatly destructive to the State; and still, as they may be committed with Privacy,

* Mr Warburton, in his *Divine Legation*.

vacy, they escape with Impunity? Besides, the greatest Villains are very often most subtle and refined in the Art of exculpating themselves, and thereby elude the most quick-sighted and inquisitive Justice. And withal, let it be considered, that there are some Vices which the State has both Power and Inclination to punish, but yet is under a Kind of Necessity to connive at, in order to take away every Pretext for the Commission of more enormous Crimes. Nor are these Difficulties, great as they be, the worst that the State labours under in the Execution of its Laws, and in the Distribution of Rewards and Punishments. There is a certain invincible Perverseness in human Nature, which is Proof against the wisest Laws that human Authority can enact, and perhaps for no other Reason but because they are enacted. *Quis nobis Dominus?* has been the proud rebellious Outcry against the State, ever since there was a civil State in Being. And there are, in every Age and Climate, some Men of such unhappy refractory Tempers, that they will be tied down by no one Act of the State, tho' the Thing be in itself Good, and carries its own great Sanction along with it: Nay, and in all Probability, had it not been enjoined by lawful Authority, these perverse People would then have readily enough complied with it. These Mens Pique is not so much against the wise Laws themselves, as at their being enjoined by human Authority. For such is the

Pride and Ignorance (fatal inseparable Twins!) of these Men, that they won't see the double Mistake they are guilty of: First, for wantonly flying in the Face of the Government that protects them, an Act in itself highly culpable; and then for transgressing in such Things, as, on Account of their public Utility, ought to be religiously complied with, whether they had been enjoined by the State or not. But then their being enjoined by the State does not abate, but greatly increase Mens Obligation to a strict Observance. Things in themselves beneficial to Mankind, can never cease to be so by having the Sanction of the Civil Powers. Nay, and all such Actions, Customs, and Things, as are in their own Nature quite indifferent, cease to be so in their Use, when once they are prohibited or enjoined by legal Authority. But here be pleased to notice, that though the State has an indisputable Right to give its Sanction, either for the total Prohibition or Encouragement of such indifferent Actions, Customs, and Things, as the Exigency of the Times may require, and the Wisdom of the great Legislature of the Kingdom suggest; yet not all the Powers of State can, by any public Act, Toleration, or Connivance whatsoever, alter the Essence of Things or Actions, so as to make Virtue Vice, and Vice Virtue. This was indeed the Opinion of the unhappy Mr *Hobbes*, who seemed to think that there could be no other Rule of judging what was Right or Wrong,

Wrong, but from what was publicly enacted and declared to be so by the Civil State. He affirms,—“ That to be Right only which is “ not contrary to the Law, and that Wrong “ which is so.” But if this were the only Rule of Right or Wrong, then it would follow, that whatever any Power Legislative, (whether invested in many, in few, or in one single Person) should enact, would be strictly binding, though the Things enacted were ever so vile in themselves, or injurious to the Public. This pernicious Opinion might in all Likelihood be swallowed down by those poor miserable Wretches who were born in Slavery, and are governed by a Prince, whose * despotick Pleasure alone passes for a Law, and who stamps Things and Actions right or wrong *pro suo Arbitrio*; yet may kind Heaven ever forbid that such a Satanical Maxim should ever fix its Standard on this Side the Water, or find one single Vassal to bow down to it amongst free-born Britons. But this fatal Maxim, which asserts that there is no other Difference in Things than what they receive from the Will and Sanction of the Prince or State, is such bare-faced gross Adulation to the ruling Powers, so certainly destructive to the very Being of the State, and every Way crouded with so many impious Absurdities, that the bare Mention of this Opinion is a sufficient Confutation of it.

Having

* *Stat pro Ratione Voluntas.*

Having therefore, as I humbly apprehend (becoming Deference always being paid to more able Judges, as well as to the Determinations of the great Legislature of this Realm) shewn in general what the State can, and what it cannot do, in the Advancement of Virtue and the Discountenancing of Vice, how far only the State can reward the one, and how far only it can punish the other; does it not from hence abundantly appear, that the civil State is under an absolute Necessity of calling in the Assistance of some other Arguments, whereby to encourage the Practice of Moral Duties, and to restrain Men from Vice, than any that she is possessed of as public Administratrix of temporal Rewards and Punishments? For though we allow that the Legislature has, besides its own coercive Authority to punish and reward, two very powerful Allies in the Advancement of Virtue and the Discouragement of Vice, *viz.* the different Sanctions which generally attend the Practice of the one and of the other, as well as the frequent Interposition of Providence, visibly displayed in this World in its Approbation of Virtue and Abhorrence of Vice; yet all these most powerful Aids have never, to this very Day, been able to secure the Laws of Morality from Insult and Contempt. There have, in all Ages of the World, been Men of such invincible Profaneness, as not to be reclaimed from the greatest Enormities by any Sort of temporal Expedients. For with regard to those

Sanctions

Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments which are in the Power of the State to administer, we need go no farther than this present Age for a convincing Proof of their Weakness and Insufficiency. This Truth is daily more and more confirmed by the acknowledged Increase of Robberies and Murders; Murders of such a shocking Nature and complicated Guilt, as till very lately were unheard of in this Part of Christendom. For such is that supercilious Disdain and avowed Contempt in which some perverse People hold the best of Laws which human Wisdom can enact, that I won't be positive, whether, ere long, it would not be the readiest Way for the great Legislature of this Kingdom, whenever it had a Mind to carry any good Laws into Execution, strictly to inhibit the very Thing it would have to be done; and, on the contrary, whatever the State should see wise Reasons to prohibit, there to injoin the Thing meant to be prohibited. For such is the incredible Perverseness of many in this Nation, that though they would never dream of committing several Actions, had they not been prohibited by legal Authority, yet that alone is to these Men a sufficient Plea; and what Thing soever has the odious Sanction of the great Senate of this Kingdom, becomes an Object of Hatred and Contempt, and for no other visible Reason, but because it is a Parliamentary Act. We have an Instance of this Nature, as recent as ridiculous, in the
obstinate

obstinate Attachment of some of our wise Countrymen to the Old, or *Julian* Stile, a Method of computing Time as false and erroneous as the Judgment of those illiterate People who are for having it still continued. But if this great Veneration for the *Julian* Method of Computation of Time was confined to the common People only, we need not wonder at the Matter; because they are neither capable of judging for themselves in an Affair of this Nature, nor is it possible for any Thing less than a Miracle to turn them out of the old beaten Track, which they and their Fathers before them have been accustomed to walk in. But we are told, there are some Men utterly averse to the *Gregorian*, or New Stile, who ought to know better, and to disdain the Thoughts of abetting the Cause of Ignorance and Superstition, by spiriting up a senseless Mob into a Non-Compliance with every new Act or Custom which has the Sanction of Parliament: And I apprehend it is owing to this implicit Veneration for old Laws and Customs, that every Alteration of these ancient Usages, though ever so much for the better, is looked upon as a dangerous Innovation. In some Cases it undoubtedly is so; but then to lay this down for a general Rule, would not only be paying a more servile Adoration to Antiquity than any thinking Man can reasonably comply with, but it would be an eternal Bar against every Step to a Reformation, not in Matters of Religion

ligion only, but in all secular Affairs, though undertook with ever so much prudent Deliberation, or conducted with ever so much Coolness and Moderation. For according to this Rule of making Antiquity the Standard of Prudence, and supposing that our Progenitors were in all Respects wiser than ourselves, it would follow, that they were obliged to abide by whatever had been the Usage of their Ancestors, and these by the Custom of their Forefathers, and so on to the remotest Ages: So that whatever Custom had once obtained amongst Men in any former Period of Time, it was to be perpetually binding upon all future Generations. But this is such an illogical Method of arguing, and proves so infinitely too much, that it would be worse than trifling to dwell any longer upon it. Nor should I have thought it worth my while to have took any Notice of a Method of Reasoning in its own Nature absurd, only from thence to shew how many Difficulties always attend every new Act, Custom, or Law, be the Thing enacted ever so unexceptionable. Every Attempt to a Reformation, whether in Civil or Religious Matters, has a thousand Obstacles to get over, and many Adversaries to encounter, of various and quite opposite Complexions. Some will oppose every Step to reform Men or Things, and for no other Reason, but because they themselves were not the Projectors; others oppose merely for the Sake of so doing; some

Men

Men have sinister Ends to answer in traversing every Thing that comes from the higher Powers, and have always Address enough to make the undiscerning Herd adore them as Patriots, and the only disinterested Friends of their Prince and Country, at the same Time that they are endeavouring to distress the one, and enslave the other. And as there may be, I presume, some few at least in this Nation, who are upon Principle Enemies to all Kinds of Government and good Order; others who are, and ever will be, Enemies to the Powers that are in Being, and for no other Reason but because they are in Being, and, as such, present Objects of Hatred and Envy; so when all these Things are considered together, it is evident that every Government has more than enough upon its Hands, and that it is a mighty easy Matter for any Party of Men, if they have shook off all Ties of Religion, to embarrass and distress the wisest Measures which any Government ever did or could pursue. Nothing more is necessary to raise the most formidable Opposition both in Church and State, than to sow a few Seeds of Jealousy between them both. And if any evil-minded Men do but once cry out the Church is in Danger from the State, or the State is going to fall a Victim to the Avarice and Ambition of Church-men, immediately the Bigots of each Party take the Alarm; and by this Means the Church and State have been frequently spirited up by their common Adversary

Adversary to commence Hostilities against each other, and almost to the utter Ruin and Subversion of both. This is a sad Truth, too recent in our own Annals to be denied; upon which Account we might very reasonably hope, that *Britons* would not for the future be so easily duped by those subtle Adversaries of this Nation, who are well convinced there is no other human Method of conquering this fruitful envied Land, than by dividing the Affections, debauching the Manners, and enervating the Bodies of its Inhabitants with every odious Species of Intemperance and Excess. The Government has indeed of late exerted a noble Spirit for the Punishment and Suppression of every notorious Kind of Extravagance and Vice, by suppressing, as far as the written Laws have a Power, most (and I sincerely wish we could say all) of those scandalous Places, which are the Nurseries of Lewdness, and Receptacles of Villains and Sharpers. But then the most salutary Laws which the grand Council of this Nation can devise, are only so many dead literary Mandates, till those great Personages of this Realm, who are supposed to be best acquainted with the true Import of these Laws, will be pleased to explain them to the rest of the Nation, and to inform their Countrymen how far the penal Laws extend, who are, and who are not privileged to transgress them with Impunity. For there is a very odd untoward Opinion begins to prevail amongst
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some People, that in all Laws enacted for the Suppression of Profaneness and Immorality, and for the Promotion of Virtue and true Religion, a saving Clause is always tacitly supposed to be annexed, in favour of all those amongst the Nobility and Quality of the Kingdom, as shall think fit to make use of it. For though there once were Laws made, and I never yet heard of their being repealed, strictly injoining one Day in seven to be solemnly observed by all Ranks of Men as a national Sabbath, and forbidding all Kinds of Gaming and Parties of Riot and Intemperance, as well as servile Labour, upon this sacred Day; yet we are now told, that the Observation of the Sabbath is only binding upon weak superstitious Minds, and the lower Class of People. The Quality it seems, and all the Men of *Genius* and *Taste*, are wholly exempt from the Observation of the Christian Sabbath; and know better than to blot out one Day in seven from the Kalendar of Life, and thereby sacrifice the sublime Pleasures of the GRAND SCIENCE to the low trifling Affairs of religious Worship, fit only for weak vulgar Minds, and such dull Mortals as are wholly unacquainted with genteel Life. Well, all this may be true for ought I shall presume at present to gain-say: For it would be extremely absurd, as being quite out of Character, for our modern Men of *Taste* and *Genius* to be tied down to the Observance of the Christian Sabbath, till they can be taxed with being
guilty

guilty of Christianity, a Thing which they are conscious their most spiteful Enemies cannot lay to their Charge. No: Christianity is all Foolishness to the profound superior Reason of these wondrous Men; it is what in Words they avowedly deny, and what in Works they are too consistent with themselves to acknowledge. It being then very notorious how many, and how formidable Opposers there are of any Laws, which the State can exact for the Promotion of Virtue, and Discouragement of Vice, need it excite our Wonder if this pernicious Humour of evading or contemning the Law, and every Thing that is sacred, which obtains so much amongst the Great *, gradually descends throughout all Ranks of Men; and seems, if not speedily checked, to forebode no Good to this infatuated Nation. Nor is this a mere imaginary and gloomy Notion, it is what all serious Men fear, and which the august Senate of *England* is not a little apprehensive of, as is evident from the pathetic Speeches of several worthy Members in both Houses, most passionately deploring the growing Enormities of

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* Let not this be construed as a general Charge against the *British* Quality: God forbid! Such an Imputation would be as false as it would, in the highest Degree, be rude and impudent. And I can, from my own Knowledge, affirm, that there are several noble Families in this Kingdom, where Virtue and unaffected *Piety* are admitted into great Familiarity, and reflect no mean *Lustre* upon all the Neighbourhood around them.

this Land. Nay, the same melancholy Truth has, more than once, been acknowledged from the Throne; and his Majesty, like a true Father of his People, has repeatedly recommended it to the Wisdom of his Parliament, to endeavour by all possible Means to stem that rapid Torrent of Luxury and outrageous Profuseness that seems breaking in upon all Ranks of Men throughout the Kingdom. And it must be acknowledged, that the great Legislators of the Realm have so far honourably discharged themselves of the high Trust reposed in them, as to have punctually complied with his Majesty's pressing Injunctions towards a National Reformation, by lately enacting the most salutary Laws for the Suppression of Profaneness and Immorality. But then I apprehend, with unfeigned Submission to the Great Council of this Nation, that though so much has been lately done for the Suppression of National Profaneness, something very material still remains undone; and notwithstanding we have so many excellent Laws, yet either some additional ones are wanting, or else a more strict and more impartial Execution of those already in Being. And might I freely declare my own private Sentiments, I think, that in all penal Laws, and in every public Act of the Legislature for the Suppression of National Impieties, there should not be one single Exception in it in Favour of the greatest Personage in the Kingdom: But that

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it should be strictly enjoined, and as strictly put in Execution, to make all that were alike guilty, all alike Objects of public Justice. This would be a *truly noble Spirit*, well becoming the Honour of the *British Senate*. For if a Thing be in itself criminal, it ought, in this Case, to be said of the Legislature of the Realm, what *Ben-Sirach* affirms of the Author of all Perfection, ~~wis. (Ecclus. XV. 20.)~~ *He hath commanded no one to do wickedly, neither hath he given any Man Licence to Sin.* And it must needs be confessed, that were the ruling Powers of this, or any other Kingdom, not to imitate this glorious Pattern of the Divine Being, but instead thereof to exempt the Great, and suffer them to transgress with Impunity Laws, which themselves have in all likelihood had a share in Establishing, what would the rest of the Nation think and mutter upon this Occasion? I am *afraid* the good People without Doors would look upon it as a kind of unequal Proceedure, and be too forward to draw from thence very unmannerly Conclusions, as if the ruling Powers, by enacting penal Laws against Profaneness and Immorality, had not the Cause of Virtue, and a general Reformation of Manners so much at Heart, as to shew their own Authority over the People of the Land. And as this is a Conclusion which ignorant and impious Men will be apt enough to make, being always fond of taking shelter under the Example of

the Great, so persuaded I am, that the Enemies of this Nation will greedily catch at every Handle against the Powers that are in Being, and will magnify the minuteſt Oversight into a capital Blunder. As therefore every Civil State has ſo many Difficulties to encounter, and as there are always a thouſand envious prying Eyes upon the Powers that be, I preſume that whatever Arguments the State can be furniſhed with, in order to procure a more ſolemn Obſervance of its Mandates for the Advancement of true Religion, and the Suppreſſion of national Impieties, will be no very unacceptable Preſent to the Public. It has been already obſerved that the State, as ſuch, has not Power ſufficient to puniſh all kinds of Vice; yet I humbly apprehend the State is inveſted with a much greater Authority to puniſh all kinds of daring Profaneneſs, than it ordinarily exerciſes. Whether this Connivance at notorious Violators of the Laws of Morality be not, in its Conſequences, rather an Act of Cruelty than Compaſſion, belongs not to me to determine. But if the good Order and Happineſs of the greater Numbers be the principal Object of the State, then Severity towards the Few, is abſolutely neceſſary *in terrorem* of the Many. And upon this Account, Connivance in the State at any of the greater Crimes, is very weak Politics, or at beſt a good-natured Injury to the Commonwealth in general. And having mentioned the

the greater Crimes, amongst these I may (with Submission to our modern Men of Taste and Genius) rank that destructive Trade * of Gaming, that daring Profanation of the National Sabbath, with that avowed and bare-faced Contempt of the sacred Bed, which is now looked upon as a Gentleman's Privilege, and an essential Qualification in the Man of high Taste. But that these are Crimes of the deepest Dye, and, in their Consequence, utterly destructive to the very Existence of the Civil State, is a sad Truth, confirmed by the most authentic History of former Ages. As to the modern Trade of Gaming, it would be well for the Nation if it was confined to the Great only: But the fatal Itch is spread amongst all Ranks of Men; and I am much afraid that, ere long, there will scarce be one single Elbow in the Kingdom, that won't be seized with the paralytic Evil, unless some more effectual Remedy be speedily applied. And persuaded I am, that if the Quality of this Nation did but seriously reflect, what Misery and Distress must ensue from that false Taste which makes Gaming the sole Business of the Day, and converts every thing into

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Gaming

* *Trade* I have put it, because it is Gaming, being at present carried to this Excess, that renders it so highly culpable, it being upon that account so very pernicious to every laudable and manly Pursuit. It is not the Use, but the Abuse of Cards or Dice, that I deem unlawful, and making those Things the whole Employment of Time, which were designed for so many necessary Unbendings and occasional Amusements through the dull Journey of Life.

Gaming, under some Shape or other, they would blush at their own Indiscretion, and cordially pity the inferior Class of the People, whom their pernicious Example has taught to shame the Day, and murder the Night by ratling the enchanted Cubes. And if my Lord ——— would but look up to that brave General on his right Hand, and great Statesman on the Left, from whom his Lordship derives his noble Blood; if he did but think, with what fixed Indignation, his venerable Ancestors look down upon their hopeful Descendant, every Night putting the * fair Patrimony they left him, into the Power of blind Chance, his Lordship would forthwith quit the midnight Dice, and be ashamed to make his Palace the Nocturnal *Rendezvous* of Sharpers and Villains for the Future. For let his Lordship look upon his Ancestors placed around him in every Apartment, and all frowning in Canvasses, to see their thoughtless Survivor thus shamefully debasing the Dignity of his Birth, and his Lordship would no longer boast the Pride of Ancestry, but at once acknowledge the Justness of this most elegant Piece of Satire.

————— *Effigies quo Tot
Bellatorum si luditur alea pernox,
Ante Numantinos? Si dormire incepis ortu,
Luciferi, quo signo Duces & castra movebant?*
JUVEN. Sat. VIII. ver. 9.

* ——— *Hunc abia decoquit.*

P E R S. Sat. V. Lib. 57.

I have took the liberty to mention this great national Evil of excessive Gaming, as it is at present become the Watch-word of the Day, not only in the Great Metropolis of this Kingdom, but in every Corner of the Land where there are People weak enough to ape their Superiors. And to such an incredible Pitch of Gaming, mad Profuseness, and astonishing Luxury, is the Nation at this very Hour arrived, that there is scarce a Journey-man Mechanic, but what (along with his hopeful Master) in his Turn sets up for the Gentleman, and mimicks the Man of Fortune in his Foibles, and out-does him in his Vices. Where these Things will end, is too apparent from the daily Miseries and Destructions which this one single Vice of excessive Gaming introduces into some of the best Families in the Kingdom.

What Desolation, what Ruin, what Robberies, what Duels and Murders, what Tragedies in private Families, and other most shocking Enormities, generally ending in Madness and Self-murder, daily stun our Ears; and all these fearful Crimes flowing from one single Source, *viz.* "the late bad Run," or one unlucky Mistake in the Grand Science? As all those dreadful Disasters therefore flow principally from one and the same Cause, it may very likely seem strange that the Government does not interpose its Authority to put a more effectual stop to a Vice that seems to threaten

no less than utter Ruin to the Nation in general. But however, let us not be too forward to condemn the Legislature for not doing a Thing that is so much out of its Power. If we must be liberal of our Censures, let them fall upon the right Objects. The Great Council of the Nation has devised every Expedient in its Power for the Suppression of unlawful Gaming: We have Laws lately enacted, strictly forbidding, under very severe Penalties, all excessive Gaming upon every Day, and the least Use of any kind of Games upon one Day in in Seven; and if after all these Laws solemnly passed under the Sanction of the three Great Estates of the Kingdom, the Quality think themselves privileged to act as they please, what, or who are we to blame, the Men in Power, or those that are above it? The Legislature has enacted Penal Laws in abundance to stop the fatal Progress of all iniquitous Gaming; and if these Laws are not more strictly executed, it does not appear to be so much for want of Inclination in the State, as want of Power. And the same Remark will, I believe, hold good with regard to that other National Crime; namely, the boasted Profanation of the Christian Sabbath. This weekly Festival is as strictly enjoined as any one Thing which ever passed under the public Sanction of the Laws of this Realm; and the very Existence of the State is so inseparably annexed to the solemn Observance of this

this sacred Day, that should it once become totally abrogated, there would be an utter End of all national as well as private Felicity. There would then be no such Thing as Security, either in Mens Properties or their Lives, and we should in a little Time become more Savage than our Predecessors in this Island, the ignorant *Piëts*, and by far more miserable, forasmuch as by our Luxuries we are become more tender, feeble and effeminate than our hardy Ancestors. But yet, notwithstanding it is in Point of Policy (all religious Motives apart) so much for the temporal Interest of the Quality of this Nation to encourage a solemn Observance of the National Sabbath, and though the Legislature has repeatedly recommended, and, in Concurrence with the Church, most strictly enjoined all Ranks of Men to keep Holy the Christian Sabbath; yet how regardless the *British* Quality are of their own temporal Interest, and how little Veneration many of them pay to the National Sabbath, a sacred Festival enjoined by the Government that protects them, I dare not declare, and I tremble to think of. Nor has the State, hitherto at least, been more successful in putting a stop to the third greater Crime, the avowed Violation of the sacred Bed. For that this atrocious Crime must be pretty common in this Nation, is evident from the impudent Boastings of those who are guilty of it, and the Scorn and Ridicule always attending the
Persons

Persons injured, who are stigmatized with an Appellation of scornful Reproach for that which is not their Crime, but their deplorable Misfortune. Nay, this Monster has of very late Years made such horrid Strides in this Island, that a Violation of the sacred Bed is held in no sort of Disreputation: Nor are the sacred Rites of Marriage looked upon in any other Light than as necessary to Legitimate, or to repair the ruined Affairs of the profligate Libertine by the Fortunes of an unhappy deluded Woman, devoted ere long to the insupportable Insults of every Prostitute, her perjured dissolute Husband shall take to his unlawful Embraces. Nor is this destructive Crime confined to the Great World alone, which may perhaps think itself privileged, like Men in a certain Age of the World, to do "whatsoever is right in its own Eyes," but the fatal Poison is spread far and wide. The common People are always forward to imitate and to plead the Example of their Superiors. And tho' the Foibles and Crimes of Men in High Life can be no just Plea for others to be guilty of the same Misconduct; yet the Examples of the Great are a Handle, not to say a Temptation, to weak and vulgar Minds, who even think it their Duty to *ape* their Superiors. And to such a Pitch of Madness do the common People imitate all the Vices and Extravagancies of Men of Fortune, as to render those Vices so excessively ridiculous, that they cannot fail, I should think,

of

of becoming very strong Antidotes to those very Men in High Life from whom the Vulgar copy, and even out-do their great Originals, as far as they know how, in every Species of Madness and Debauchery. For if the Great Man in the Neighbourhood is an avowed Libertine, if he is guilty of the third greater Crime, and thinks high Birth a Privilege for violating the sacred Bed, then it may be depended upon, that all who live under the fatal Droppings, from the great Man's chief Tenant, down to the lowest Mechanic, will plead the Example of their Principal in Vindication of their own Debaucheries and Excesses.

I call Violation of the sacred Bed the *third* greater Crime, because it will appear, upon strict Examination, that this, with the two already mentioned, are not only in themselves great, but that to these fashionable Vices we may ascribe the Origin of all those crying Sins, which at this unhappy Period are making such horrid Strides into every remote Corner of the Kingdom. In a small Treatise, entitled, "Examples of the Interposition of Providence in the Detection and Punishment of Murder," published by one of the best Magistrates in the Kingdom, we have the following Paragraphs, namely, "In the Politic (as in the Natural) Body, no Disorders ever spring up without a Cause; much less do any Diseases become epidemical by mere Accident. These must all have their Causes, and such Causes must

“ must be adequate to the Effects which they
 “ produce. For my Part, I sincerely declare,
 “ I can see no more than one Cause of the
 “ horrid Evil of which I am complaining;
 “ one indeed most perfectly adequate to the
 “ Production of every political Mischief; and
 “ which I am convinced hath, more than all
 “ others, contributed to the Production, and
 “ to the Increase of all those moral Evils with
 “ which the Public is at present so extremely
 “ afflicted. My sensible Reader will presently
 “ guess, that I mean that general Neglect (I
 “ wish I could not say Contempt) of Religion
 “ which hath within these few Years so fa-
 “ tally overspread this whole Nation; hath
 “ grown to a Kind of Fashion among us;
 “ and, like all other Fashions, having begun
 “ amongst the highest Ranks of People, hath
 “ descended gradually through all Orders, till
 “ it hath reach’d the very lowest in the So-
 “ ciety.” This, as far as it goes, is a very
 concise and true Account of the Source and
 Origin of the present Enormities of this Na-
 tion. But had this ingenious Gentleman ex-
 tended his Reasonings (than whose none are
 stronger) one Step farther, he would have
 found, that a Contempt of Religion, which
 he assigns as the sole Cause of every political
 Mischief, (though in Fact true) is still but a
 secondary Cause; and that we must go a little
 farther, if we would investigate that fatal Source
 from whence every moral Evil springs. Con-
 tempt

tempt of Religion is, as this worthy Magistrate with his wonted Propriety observes, "most perfectly adequate to the Production of every political Mischief;" but then it may be asked, What is the Cause of this general Contempt of Religion? Why that general Disbelief of Religion's most powerful Sanction, the Sentence of future eternal Misery, upon the persevering invincible Sinner. It is this avowed Disbelief of future Torments, that is the Cause of the three greater Crimes, from which all the other shocking Enormities of this Nation derive their black Original. There is not, I may venture to affirm, so much as one single Vice in the Nation, but what is owing mediately or immediately to some one of these three greater Crimes, *viz.* a contemptuous Profanation of the Sabbath, (or, in other Words, a Contempt of Religion) *Violation of the sacred Bed*; and *excessive Gaming*, which is but a softer way of expressing the most refined Robbery, and villainous Overreaching. And as all other national Impieties are owing to some one of these, so two of these, *viz.* Adultery and impious Gaming, are the immediate Consequence of the other, *viz.* Profanation or Contempt of the Christian Sabbath. But the dreadful Cause of these three notorious Vices, and of every other moral Evil consequent therefrom, is that boasted Disbelief of the tremendous Sanction. And to set this Affair in the most familiar Light, let us ask what is the Cause

Cause of that most shocking Crime of Suicide, which is become more common than ever among the Men of *Gay Life*, as it is ridiculously enough stiled? Why, the fatal Cause of this rash Act is a *bad run*, or *one accursed unlucky Die*. And pray what is the Cause of Gaming's being carried to this Excess, but an avowed Contempt of the Laws of God and Man? And what else is the Cause of this shameful Contempt of Religion, but that impudent and professed Disbelief of that fearful Sanction which Religion denounces upon all notorious and incorrigible Sinners? For did the Self-murderer seriously believe, that by ridding himself out of a Temporal Calamity, brought upon him by his own Indiscretion, he plunged his Soul that Moment into the Land of eternal Horror, he would at once sheath the impious Dagger, and fling away the accursed Pistol. And as to those numberless Robberies, and most horrid Murders, which are almost every Day perpetrated in this very Kingdom, they are entirely owing to the *second* greater Crime, *Profanation* of the Sabbath. For not to mention the Obligation which all dependant Creatures are under of paying public Adoration to the Author of Nature; be it noticed, that an avowed Contempt of a National Sabbath, and an habitual Neglect of frequenting those sacred Places, where the Necessity and Importance of every moral and religious Duty are fully proved, and recommended

mended with the united Advantages of as sound Learning, and as nervous Eloquence, as ever, at any one Period of Time, flourished amongst the public Teachers of Religion; this habitual Neglect, I say, is one fatal Source of those encreasing Enormities, which are a Scandal to the Christian Name, and an eternal Reproach upon the native good Sense and Discretion of the *British* Nation. For when Men wilfully turn their Backs upon all Places of public Worship, they thereby lose the gracious Opportunities of Instruction; they take themselves out of the Hands of Providence, and plunge Headlong into the Pit of Misery and Ruin. And give me leave to observe, that there is such a close Connection between the very Existence of the Civil State and a religious Observation of the National Sabbaths, that were these stated Times of public Worship only abolished for the Space of one *single* Year, it would be attended with very tragical Effects upon the Peace and Happiness of the Kingdom. First, the Bulk of the Nation would lose all Sense of their Duty to, and Dependance upon God; in Consequence whereof, the People would in a very little while become utter Strangers to all Humanity and Tendernefs for their fellow Creatures. For it is a Truth founded upon repeated Observations, that Men are always courteous, affable, and friendly one towards another, in Proportion to that Sense they have
of

of Religion, and of their Dependence upon God. The Man who is undutiful to his Creator, can never, unless by mere Accident, be very ready to any Acts of Kindness and Humanity to his fellow Creatures. Where there is no Sense of Religion, there can be no true Principle of Friendship; nor will the Wretch that dares wilfully offend his God, make any Scruple of betraying and sacrificing his Friend. For though I readily allow that an impious profane Man may now and then do a good and generous Action, yet he does not do Good upon a solid Principle; his Acts of Friendship and Humanity are either mercenary, partial, or at the most the mere Effect of his natural Temper: For a good-natured Disposition will very often get the better of Men, of the most impious Sentiments in Religion. But then their kind Offices are not done in Obedience to any positive divine Command, but just as they happen for the Time to be in a good Humour; and their Acts of Generosity are frequently bestowed upon the most infamous Objects. For as Virtue can be no Recommendation to a Man who has no true Sense of Religion, neither are Vice and Immorality, as such, any Bar to these Mens Favours, which are generally flung away upon the most immoral and abandoned People.

It is therefore for this, and many other important Reasons, that the National Sabbaths ought not, I presume, to be wholly set aside.

aside. For as these regular stated Times of Devotion keep alive in Mens Minds a Sense of Religion, so we are instructed in these our Weekly Assemblies to have our Religion founded upon a true and solid Principle. And as Men would soon degenerate into the worst of Savages, (the rational Brute being of all others the most dangerous, as capable of doing the most Mischief) were they once void of all Sense of Religion; so Religion itself would quickly become enthusiastic Madness and blind Superstition, were there not some certain fixed Days set apart, as well for the solemn Worship of our Maker, as for explaining, recommending, and enforcing the serious Practice of those great Branches of the divine and moral Law, our Duty to God, to our Neighbour, and to ourselves. The only rational human Expedient to preserve our holy Religion from degenerating into rank Idolatry, and ourselves from sinking into gross Ignorance and Barbarity, is by a strict and solemn Observance of that sacred Day, enjoined by the Statutes of the Realm, as well as by the *sacred* Code.

I am, however, well aware, that it may be said, Numbers of those who pay the most constant Attendance in the House of Prayer, are, for all that, as culpable in their Conduct as the rest of the Nation; and that it may be farther observed, that Hypocrites have, in all Ages of the World, been most forward to

" tread God's Courts, as a People that delight-
 " ed to know the Ways of Heaven, and for-
 " sook not the Ordinances of their God." —
 Now all this may be, (and I fear is but) too
 true : But still, the Abuse of any divine Ordi-
 nances can be no just Reason for laying them
 utterly aside; neither is Hypocrisy in some,
 any Excuse for Profaneness in others. And I
 am humbly of Opinion, that those Men who
 pay constant Attendance in the House of
 Prayer, where they so often hear God's fear-
 ful Threats solemnly denounced against invin-
 cible Impiety, and his gracious Promises to
 the truly humble and repenting Sinner, must
 be *Monsters* of stupid Perverseness, if some
 Ray of divine Grace does not, one time or
 other, dart into the Soul, and melt it down
 into Tears of unfeigned Repentance. And
 notwithstanding those People who attend the
 Places of public Worship may fall into many
 great Errors, yet I dare venture to affirm, that
 they stand a much fairer Chance to recover
 themselves, and to walk more warily for the
 Future, than those unhappy People who for-
 sake the Temple of the living God, and in so
 doing, deprive themselves of so many merciful
 Opportunities of Conviction. And to be more
 fully convinced of the Misery and Ruin that
 must, in the very Nature of Things, ensue
 from a profane Neglect and Contempt of those
 sacred Times set apart for the Business of Re-
 ligion, we need only turn our Eyes to those
 poor

poor benighted Nations, where they have no regular stated Days for divine Worship, &c. nor any other fixed Rule for public Devotion, than what their own bewilder'd Imaginations suggest: Their Manner of expressing what little Sense they have of some overruling Power, is as ridiculous as impious; some dancing to every Full Moon, others breaking out into idolatrous Extasy at the welcome Return of the vernal Spring.

But we need not go into other Nations for a Proof of the moral Evils that are, and must be Consequences of an utter Neglect of frequenting some Place or other of public Worship, upon certain fixed and regular Days, set apart for that sacred Purpose: For it is but too notorious, that those abandon'd People in this our Land, who never make their Appearance in the Sanctuary, are as utter Strangers, generally speaking, to all the Rules of Civility, and even common Humanity, as to a Sense of their Duty to the kind Author of their Subsistence; and are upon this Account equally odious in the Eyes of God and Man. So that the least that can be said in Vindication of our National Sabbaths is, that it is owing to our People's regular Attendance at divine Service upon these sacred Days, that we are not as savage and illiterate as our ignorant Progenitors were, when *Julius Cæsar* first invaded this our Island. And were these Things consider'd with the Attention due to their Im-

portance, Men would then, in Proportion to the Dignity of their Rank and Character, countenance a regular Observance of that sacred Day, when the People are most solemnly instructed, and intreated *for Conscience-sake*, to fear God, to honour the King, and to be submissive to all that are put in Authority under him.

As then it appears that a solemn Observation of a National Sabbath is absolutely necessary, (and in all Ranks of Men) to the very Existence of the Civil State, and as we have likewise shewn some of the tragical Effects naturally consequent from an habitual Profanation of this sacred Day, may I be indulged, through the Clemency of the Legislature, just to mention the dreadful Mischiefs necessarily ensuing from the third greater Crime, a *Violation of the sacred Bed*. The Evils arising from this one single Crime, are perhaps of more dangerous Consequence to the State than any other National Vice. From hence we may derive the Infamy and Ruin of some of the first Families in the Kingdom: It is this hideous Monster that makes such ruinous Attacks upon the *fairest Works* of Creation, and annually devours Thousands of *British Virgins*. Nor let this be looked upon as merely declamatory; no, it is a *tragical Fact*, as notorious as it is productive of every private and public Evil. For did the Mischief extend no farther than those People who, by virtue of a
very

very *peculiar Genius*, and a *Taste well refined*, are privileged to take what Liberties they please, the State might not be under any imminent Danger; but the Crime we are speaking of is, I fear, become of too serious a Nature to be wholly overlooked by the State, because it is become so general; and if suffered to make still greater Strides, *Britain* may have Cause to lament the fearful Consequence. — And did it fall immediately within my Design, I could shew that this black libidinous Monster has brought on the Crisis of utter Desolation to the most flourishing Kingdoms: Nay, and were it not deemed downright Superstition to quote any Authorities from the divine Code, I could prove from thence, that a Violation of the sacred Bed, with its black Attendants, did once upon a Time, not only subvert Kingdoms, but the whole World, save eight surviving Objects of divine Mercy. For it was this very Crime that brought on the general Deluge: It was when *Men took them Wives of all which they chose*, that made God sternly declare *his Spirit should not always strive with Man*. Our Translation, *they took them Wives*, is both faulty, and by no means expressive of the Thing described, which was not a lawful free Choice in both the Parties contracting, but a lustful and violent Act committed upon every innocent Woman their heated Imaginations chose. This, as the Author of the *Syn. Crit.* observes, being the same

Word with that used in the Account of *Shechem's* Rape committed upon *Dinah* the Daughter of *Jacob*. See *Gen. XXXIV. 2.* So that the Crime of the Antediluvians was of the blackest Hue: And therefore *Pool* would have it render'd, *Videntes Filii Dei filias hominum quod pulchræ essent, rapuerunt sibi Uxores ex omnibus quas elegerant.* The Mistake in the common *Latin* Translations is owing, I imagine, to a too servile Imitation of the *Greek* Version, which retains in most Copies *ἑλαβον, acceperunt.* Who are there meant by the *Filii Dei* and the *Filiae Hominum*, so emphatically contradistinguished from each other, is shewn in the fifth Section of the first Book of the following Treatise. But as I do not expect that the Men of Genius will pay much Regard to Scripture Authority, (the sacred Oracles not being allowed by this discerning Age the Privilege even of common History) these wondrous Men will however be pleased to recollect, that a general Violation of the sacred Bed, is acknowledged by profane, as well as inspired Writers to have been, in whatsoever Country it prevailed, the certain Fore-runner of every National Calamity. This is a well-known Truth, to which most Writers join their Testimony: And even the smiling Poet himself, who was certainly no gloomy superstitious Bigot, introduces the Crime we have last mentioned, as the fatal Cause of all that National Misery, Confusion and Ruin, which

which so fearfully overturned the whole Roman Commonwealth.

*Fœcunda culpæ Sæcula, nuptias
Primum inquinavere, & genus, & domos.*

Hoc fonte derivata clades

In patriam populumque fluxit.

HOR. Lib. Carm. III. Od. VI.

Whether there is any Parallel between the present State of this Kingdom, and the Roman Affairs in that dissolute Age to which the Poet alludes, I am far from asserting; but let it be remember'd, that in whatever Age or Country the same Crimes are indulged, the same national, as well as private Calamities, must sooner or later ensue. This is no more than what in the very Nature of Things must be expected; for wherever the Cause of any Evil exists, the Effect must follow.

And as it has been observed what are the present fatal Sources from whence every Species of Vice proceeds, it is, I humbly presume, very obvious what Method would, in the Reason of Things, be most effectual for curbing those crying Enormities, which at this very Day are the Pest and Infamy of our Nation. The one grand poisonous Source from whence all Crimes in general may be said to flow, is (as has already been hinted) a Disbelief of the only Sanction that can keep the People within any tolerable Bounds of Duty to their God, Allegiance to their Prince, or

common Humanity one towards another. — And as from this Disbelief of the tremendous Doctrine, those three greater Crimes before mentioned derive immediately their dark Original, so it is from this *hideous triple-headed Monster*, that every other Species of Profaneness and Immorality do mediate or immediately take their first Rise. And as the fatal Mischiefs flowing from the three greater Crimes are, as appears from the universal Acknowledgment of all observing People, daily encreasing amongst us, does not common Policy (setting aside the antiquated Motives of Religion) demand, that some more effectual Remedy should be speedily applied, in order to prevent these National Evils from spreading any wider? And (with becoming Submission to the ruling Powers I speak it) what more natural Remedy can the State devise to prevent the mischievous Effects of any Vice, than by directly striking at the Vice itself? Take but away the Cause, and the Effect of course will cease. And till the fatal Cause of every National Evil be removed, the most rigorous Laws the State can enact will be to very little Purpose. Many of our Penal Laws, as they now stand, or at least as they are put in Execution, are rather levelled at the Effects of Vice, than at the Vice itself; and while Immorality is punished, Infidelity escapes with Impunity, not to say with Applause. But how it can, in the Nature of Things, be hoped, that

that being only intent upon the Effects of any notorious Crime, but wholly overlooking the Cause of it, those Effects should not still continue, is not easily conceived. The Thief and the Murderer may bleed, and still Murders and Robberies daily encrease, till the Cause of these Enormities be more severely punished: And the public Executions in this Kingdom, which create the deepest Commiseration in every tender Bosom,^{will} become yearly more and more numerous, so long as Men are suffer'd to practise those Things with Impunity, which are the very Cause of the Crimes that make these public Executions absolutely necessary, though they only punish, not prevent Vice. For in order to prevent those shocking Enormities, which are become the Terror and Reproach of the Kingdom, the Legislature (as far as the Thing is practicable) should be pleased to begin at the right End, and to make those three greater Crimes, from whence all other National Evils flow, the first Objects of public Censure. For Instance, if the great Legislature of the Kingdom would be pleased to enact, (not excepting the greatest Personage in the Realm) That whoever after such a Day should lose more than — by any Kind of Gaming, or Wager, his Heir at Law, or his Creditors, should be empower'd forthwith to take out a Writ of Lunacy against him, if convicted by impartial and unexceptionable Evidence; this would, I apprehend, soon
put

put a Stop to the iniquitous Trade of Gaming. And with regard to the Violation of the sacred Bed, it might be one very effectual Remedy to remove this spreading Evil, by enacting, That whoever should be proved, by clear and unsuspected Evidence, to live in open Adultery and Fornication, his Estate and Effects should be immediately confiscated for the Benefit of the injured Parties ; and the Offender ever after disqualified from holding any Place either in Church or State. And lastly, with relation to the third greater Crime, *viz.* an avowed Contempt and Profanation of the National Sabbath, if the Legislature should think fit to enact, That all those People who neglect to frequent any Place of Public Worship, or who carry on upon the Lord's Day any servile Labour, or travel, play at Cards, Dice, or any other Kind of Games whatsoever, their Estates and Effects should be doubly taxed, as not being Objects of the Act of Toleration, but either *Roman* Catholics or Infidels convict ; this would most certainly prevent that notorious Profanation of the Lord's Day, which at present is the Scandal, and may be the utter Subversion of the Nation. But would the State vouchsafe to level its Displeasure immediately at the three greater Crimes, and make the Suppression of these growing Vices the Object of its Censure, all those other crying Enormities, which are the *foul Offspring* of this triple-headed Monster, would gradually

gradually decrease: And the Cause of National Immoralities being once removed, the Effects would of course cease in due Time. But be pleased here to notice, that the Author does by no means presume to dictate to those Powers, whom it is his Duty to obey; much less does he imagine, that those Laws hinted at for the Suppression of Profaneness and Immorality, are Matters that can so easily, and all at once, be brought to bear: No, this he well knows would be a meer *Utopian* Expectation. He has only took the Liberty to offer the foregoing Hints, to shew that some farther Laws, or at least some other Method of putting the Laws already in Being into Execution, is necessary; but after what Manner, and in what Form, he humbly submits to the Prudence of the Great Council of the Nation.— And all that I shall say in Recommendation of the Method proposed for punishing the three greater Crimes, is, that it is going more to the Bottom of our National Maladies, as striking immediately at the fatal Cause of them. As to our public Executions, they are only levell'd at the Effect of Profaneness, not at the Cause: These Executions, though absolutely necessary, yet they do not prevent an Evil from breaking out, but only punish it after it is: This Method is only lopping off the wild, luxuriant, or rotten Branches of the Tree Politic, if I may be allowed the Expression, in whose Place others will perpetually shoot out, and

and with still more noxious Redundancy, till the Root, from whence all those poisonous Juices ascend, be utterly cut up and destroyed. And in order the more effectually to check the future Progress of those greater Crimes, from whence all other Moral Evils principally flow, it behoves the State strictly to enquire into the true Causes of these Crimes, and having once found it out, to interpose its Authority, by causing every practical Remedy to be used in order to remove that Cause. Now it is universally acknowledged, that all our National Vices, with the said Train of Ills consequent thereupon, are owing to that avowed Contempt of Religion, which at present is so far indulged, as to be expressed by the softer Titles of Gaiety, Politeness, or *Freedom* of Thought: But then be pleased to remember, that this avowed Contempt of Religion is only a secondary Cause; for the sole original Cause both of this profane Contempt of Religion, and of all the National Mischiefs consequent thereupon, is that professed Disbelief, and impudent Denial of Religion's most powerful Sanction. Nor are we to wonder at any Enormities committed in this Kingdom, so long as Men are taught to believe all these most shocking Impieties will be wholly overlook'd in a future State; and that the most abandon'd Sinners, (whether they repent and amend it matters not a Straw) will be finally saved. And what is very astonishing, this mischievous

Pamphlet,

Pamphlet, entitled, "Heaven open to all Men," has been suffered to go through more Impressions in so short a Time, than any one Book lately published in this Kingdom. That the Editor of this impudent Farrago of Blasphemies, Treasons, Murders, and every other Species of the most atrocious Crimes, (for he roundly gives a Licence to all in general, is an Object of public Censure, I shall not positively assert; but that the pernicious Book itself ought long ere now, (had any of the Ruling Powers in Church or State ever heard of it, which in Charity we must suppose they never did) to have been suppressed, can be no Matter of Debate. For Treason, I apprehend, is, under any Shape, an Object of public vindictive Justice. Whether this pernicious Book comes immediately under the Definition of *Læsa Majestas*, the learned Gentlemen of the long Robe can best determine; but if it is not Treason against earthly Majesty to blaspheme that Great *Supreme* by whom Kings reign, if setting aside all Laws, human and divine, spiriting up Rebellion and Murder, throwing down the great *Barrier* of Government, and depriving the State of the only Argument that can secure Obedience to its Authority; if all this be not Treason, I don't know what possibly can be so. One Thing however I know, that in Consequence of the Opinions maintained by the Author of "Heaven open," &c. neither his sacred Majesty, nor any of his Subjects

jects, would be many Months safe either in their Lives or Fortunes. For were all Men finally to escape unpunished, were the Murderer, the Traitor, the impious Assassin, and the Self-Executioner, all firmly persuaded, that notwithstanding they plung'd into Eternity harden'd and outrageous to the last, they should still "all, to a Man," (for these are the very Words of this Satanical Scribe) enter into everlasting Felicity, let the sober Reader judge what would ere long be the tragical Consequence of vending abroad such pernicious Blasphemies. From what Quarter these Principles come, can be no Secret to any observing Man; and the Design of industriously spreading these incendiary Pamphlets throughout every Part of the Kingdom, and studiously adapting them *ad captum Vulgi*, is too visible, I think, to escape the Notice of any one. For as we know who are the most interested in the Subversion and Ruin of this much envied Island, so none can be supposed to be more forward than these our common Adversaries, to do that by impious secret Art, which they have not yet been able to effect by outward Force. Nor could *Catiline* unhinge and overturn the *Roman* Empire, till he had first debauched the Minds, and by every Species of Luxury, and the most effeminate Pleasures, quite enervated the Bodies of the once brave and valorous *Romans*. And if such pernicious Books, as are designedly calculated to corrupt the Morals
of

of the People, and to introduce an universal Depravity of Manners, be suffer'd to escape uncensur'd, our Land may too soon become a Prey to her foreign Enemies, without the Trouble of Invasions. Neither would the Ravages of the most barbarous Nations make that dreadful Havock and Desolation in this Kingdom, as must, sooner or later, be the Lot of *Britain*, if the People are taught and encouraged to be wicked even upon Principle; and made believe that every Crime is lawful, that is profitable or convenient to the Criminal. What Reason the State has for suffering such destructive Principles to spread with Impunity, belongs not to me to enquire into: I am of Opinion, that none of our Rulers in Church or State can have either heard of or seen those infamous Works; if they had, a Stop undoubtedly long ere now would have been put to these Instruments of Darkeness.

The ancient *Greeks* and *Romans* were too wise and too politic to suffer the Gods to be ridiculed, much less blasphemed; and whoever had the Assurance to treat the National Religion with Scorn and Contempt, was seldom suffer'd to do it a second time. Now though I am far from entirely approving their Conduct in this Respect, (the impious Murder of the inspired *Socrates* being an eternal Reproach upon the *Athenians*) yet I should think it is incumbent upon Christian States at all Times to manifest a Zeal temper'd with
Prudence

Prudence and Moderation ; and to be as studious in advancing the Honour of the One true God, as Heathen States have ever been in behalf of their false Deities. I am here not unapprized what some Men will say, in order to quash every Apprehension of any National Mischiefs arising from those impious Books that are daily published, *viz.* that there will always be a Majority of prudent, right-headed Men in the Nation, sufficient to prevent these pernicious Books from doing any considerable harm, so as to endanger the Subversion of the state. Now that there are at present in this Kingdom Thousands of right-headed Men, who are ever ready to stem out, as far as they are able, that Torrent of Profaneness and Immorality which is daily bursting in upon us, is, I hope, a Truth not to be disputed. But to affirm that there always will be a Majority of prudent, right-headed Men, is, I fear, such false Prophecy, and such a fulsome Strain of base Adulation, as the sensible Part of the Nation cannot but despise. But be this as it will ; the tragical Effects of profane Writings are already too visible ; and would it not be better Policy, for the State immediately to suppress them, than either to tempt Providence any longer, or to rely wholly upon the mere imaginary Aids of human Prudence ? May I crave the Indulgence of the State freely to unfold my real Sentiments ? Then certain it is, that every profane, immoral Book, which

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is suffer'd to appear more than once in public uncensur'd, is by Numbers of People, tacitly supposed to have, at least Protection, if not Encouragement, from some great Men in Power. And this Conclusion is by no Means forced; for as the State is ever watchful and diligent (as indeed it nearly concerns it so to be) to suppress Treason in any Shape, and to bring the Authors and Abettors of this Crime to condign Punishment, it has an odd Look, when all this while the most avowed Infidelity, and most shocking Blasphemies that the Malice of impious Men can invent, are suffer'd to be daily put into the Hands of the People, and the Authors to escape with Impunity.— What a Door this is opening to Profaneness and Immorality, and what Encouragement it must give to Infidel Writers, is but too obvious. The Liberty of the Press, is undoubtedly one of an *Englishman's* most sacred Privileges; nor is the Use of this glorious Liberty to be denied to any, but the Abuse, I think, should be forbidden to all. Every impious Work that goes through the Press, is Rebellion in *Ambush*, and Treason in *Disguise*. Whatever has so manifest and flagrant a Tendency to debauch Mens Minds, and to take off all Ties of Religion, is paving the Way to a general Conspiracy, and sowing the noxious Seeds of Discord and Rebellion, not in the Hearts of a few, but of *all*. Every attempt to make Men impious and dissolute, is ripening

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ing them for Murders, Treasons and Conspiracies. Profane immoral Men are, as such, Enemies to the Government ; and though they may be loyal in Appearance, it is not upon Principle, but through Self-Interest. For whoever has no Sense at all of Religion, either Natural or Revealed, would murder his Sovereign, and sell his Country, if he could do it with present Impunity, and thereby gratify his Passions the more. And upon this Account it seems to be impolitic, at best, for any State to connive at such pernicious Writings, as openly spread abroad Treason in the Gross, and directly make Men Rebels upon Principle. For those pestilential Writers who endeavour to set aside all Obligations to Virtue, Morality, and Reverence of the great Author of Nature, ought to be looked upon as Incendiaries in the State, and only more *refined*, and, as such, more dangerous Traitors to their King, and to their Country. Whatever has a manifest Tendency to debauch Mens Morals, is robbing the Sovereign of so many of his Subjects, and the Community of so many useful Members ; and whoever is instrumental in propagating Infidelity, must thereby encrease the Number of rebellious Subjects, because he encreases the Number of impious and dissolute Men. For as the truly conscientious good Man, whatever his private political Sentiments may be, will never be an Enemy to the Government that protects him, so, on the contrary,

trary, an impious Man can never be a real Friend to the State, or at best his Loyalty will be merely accidental, or out of selfish Views, but never upon a solid lasting Principle. For when Men once shake off all Ties of Religion, when they are so far deluded as to think this Life is all that belongs to them, the natural Consequence of this Infatuation will be to make the most of Life while they are in it; and since *to-morrow they must utterly die*, they will stick at no Degree of Intemperance, or any other Crimes, which can present their Appetites with some Degree of temporal Gratifications. Nor would the blackest Crimes of Murder, Treason and Rebellion, be at all shocking, if by this Means the Traitor and Assassin had a fair Prospect before him of present Advantages. But as this Epicurean Notion of dying like the Beasts that utterly perish is so unmanly in itself, so unbecoming the Dignity of the human Soul, and every Way so shocking and absurd to the meanest Understanding; so upon this Account it is not so likely to become universal, Men of any tolerable Ingenuity being ashamed to give into an Opinion, which is such a Reproach upon human Nature. But as the grand Seducer of human Race, or if you will rather have it so, as that poisonous Part of Man which is found by Experience to be *deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked*; as, I say, one, or both of these Engines of Mischief, are always play-

ing off some destructive Battery or other upon all such as will lay themselves open to the common Enemy, so we may depend upon it, that when old Errors in Religion are once seen through by all thinking Men, and forsaken by all but Fools, then some new one or other rises up still more absurd, but withal, (monstrous Infatuation!) more greedily swallowed than all that went before it. To give the Reader an historical Detail of all those Errors which have successively risen, as it were, out of one another's * Ashes, would, if possible, be

* I have sometimes been inclined to think, that these successive Errors in Religion are emblematically pointed out in the Fable of the Phoenix; and as it is reported of this imaginary Bird, that after having for a while reigned in all the Pomp of outward Splendor, she at last becomes her own Executioner; it is much the same with all those dangerous Errors in Religion which Time after Time have lorded it over the World, till at length they dispatched themselves with their own Poison. Out of the deadly Contagion, and corrupted Matter left behind, another Error revives, which though not the same, is of the same, if not more fatal Consequence. And whoever will give himself the Trouble to read that Description of the Phoenix in the Writings of *Lactantius Firmianus*, he will find the Account given of that fabulous Bird too true a Picture, in some Respects at least, of those various successive Errors, which have been, as it were, the Phoenix of their several respective Times, and for a while held in the highest Veneration. And no sooner has one Error been subdued, but another has instantly succeeded; so certain it is that one Error, † Phoenix-like, is the Parent of another, and that of a third, and so on *ad infinitum*.

† *Ipsa sibi proles, suus pater, & suus hæres.*

Nutrix ipsa sui, semper alumna sui.

Ipsa quidem sed non eadem, quia & ipsa, nec ipsa est.

Vid. LACTANT. Phoenix.

be an Undertaking more absurd than the Errors themselves. And what has done more Mischief than all to the Cause of Truth, and of pure genuine Christianity, has been that odd prevailing Humour of paying equal, and frequently greater Veneration to human Determinations than to divine Authority. And notwithstanding Christians are, by the Example of the *Jews*, so severely caution'd not to supersede the Commandments of God, by teaching for Doctrines the Traditions and Commandments of ignorant, or designing Men, yet the Determinations of a General Council, made up of Members most of them entirely ignorant of the Business they were about, has been, and at this Day is, by many, held in greater Veneration than the Word of infallible Truth. — What has once had the Sanction of a Synod, is deemed as sacred, though the Articles enjoined have been apparently opposite to the great Standard, the Gospel of Him whose Followers they all professed themselves to be. — Nor need any one, ever so slenderly acquainted with Ecclesiastical History, be told, that what has one Time been established by a General Synod to be an Article of the true Faith, has been, perhaps at the very next Assembly of these *venerable Creed-makers*, utterly expunged, and one quite opposite enjoined in its Stead. How ought we therefore to adore the God of Truth for leaving us in ample Possession of his sacred Oracles, by which alone we are able to

distinguish what is, and what is not absolutely required as an essential Article of our most holy Religion? And I cannot help observing how very uncertain, not to say dangerous, it is to walk by any other Rule than what is manifestly chalked out in the Gospel: For were we to judge of Christianity as some Men are pleased to delineate this celestial Beauty, we should be forced to exclaim, that either we have not the pure Gospel, or that these Men are themselves very little acquainted with what they pretend to expound to others. And I apprehend it has been owing to this ridiculous Taste of paying greater Veneration to what has been called Christianity, though ever so falsely, than to that which really is so, that the Body of Christians has been so miserably divided. Hence it is, that what is stiled the true Catholick Faith in one Part of Christendom, is justly looked upon by others as little better than Idolatry: Nay, and in the very same National Church, that Opinion which at one Time has been declared truly Orthodox, at another has been stigmatized with the opposite Appellation; and a Man in one Age has been canonized for what in the following (nay, and even in the same, Instance the Reigns of *Edward VI.* and *Queen Mary*) he would have been condemned to the Block for.

But let no Man lay the Blame of this unhappy Diversity of Opinions amongst Christians, at the Door of Christianity; this, like
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its Divine Author, is always the same, at Unity in itself, and too pure to admit of any base heterogeneous Mixture of human Invention. The Fault is not chargeable upon our most holy Religion, but upon the whimsical Perverseness of *unstable-minded Men*. Nor would I have mentioned this strange and ridiculous Proceedure of Christians, in those contradictory Articles of Christianity which, at different Times, have been made necessary, even to *Salvation*, but in order to recommend a more diligent and more serious Study of the sacred Oracles. The various Enemies of Revealed Religion are all to a Man indefatigable in prying into the sacred Code; they read it with a most scrutinizing and severe Eye; then certainly those Men who are more immediately concerned in expounding and defending the sacred Oracles, are obliged, even in Point of Reputation, to study them with at least as much Application, as the avowed Enemies of Revelation do.

To a Man well stocked with Impudence and Impiety, a very little Smattering of Reading will do to furnish him with Cavils against Revelation, whereas almost an universal Knowledge of Things, and a most intimate Acquaintance with the Scope and Design of every Passage in the sacred Code, are absolutely necessary for those Men whose peculiar Business it is to expound it, and to defend it from the impious Objections of the little Free-Thinkers

and minute Philosophers of this captious Age. But there is, I hope, this Advantage however on the Side of the Advocates of Revelation, that as they study the sacred Oracles with an honest Intent, so they stand a fairer Chance to *know the Doctrines whether they be of God*, or whether they have any of them crept into the sacred Volume through the restless Officiousness of human Inventions.

The Trade of drawing over the Scriptures to the Support of human Errors, seems at present to have arrived to a very uncommon Degree of refined Subtilty; for since the secret Enemies of Revealed Religion cannot make much Progress, purely by Dint of their own Principles, they have lately pressed Christianity by Force and Torture into the vain-glorious Service of Profaneness and Immorality. These Men are too refined in the Science of Iniquity, to travel any longer in the dull beaten Track of Infidelity, or open Contempt of Revealed Religion. No Christianity they have now adopted into their Creed, but with this black Design, that they might wound it with its own Weapons, and under the Mask of an hypocritical Faith, ruin more Souls in one Age, than barefaced Infidelity, or even Atheism, has done since the Creation. Atheism is, to all thinking Men, its own Antidote, and carries in its very Looks something so ugly and forbidding, that none but Wretches wholly immersed in Sensuality, and lost to every manly Sentiment,

Sentiment, and to every pleasing Hope, can possibly be duped into its Service ; and therefore the avowed Atheist, or Infidel, is a generous Adversary in Comparison of the masked Traitor. One declares his Enmity, and therefore we are upon our Guard, the other kisses, betrays, and stabs.

A most flagrant Example of this last Species of Iniquity we have in that diabolical Work already mentioned, which under a specious Pretence of extolling the divine Goodness, and magnifying the Benefits of the Mediatorial Scheme, destroys the very Essence of Christianity, by setting aside that immutable Law which Christ came to explain by his divine Precepts, and to corroborate by his own great Example. But there is something in this blasphemous Tract so impious and foolish, and so very shocking, even to every sober Deist, that I was inclined to think when I first saw it, that it was wrote and published by a Club of Jesuits, and a Wager laid by some of these refined Impostors, who best knew the Complexions of the credulous *English*, that it would be eagerly embraced in *Britain*, notwithstanding its most apparent, and most infamous Buffoonry. But if this Conjecture was groundless, I hope the Editor will soon follow the Example of the Author of *Ontologos*, by confuting his own Work. However, let it be remember'd, that *Ludere in sacris*, is not only an Affront against God, but an Injury to the State ;
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nor can I think it is any Mitigation of that Man's Crime who *casteth about Firebrands, Arrows and Death*, to say *he was only in Sport*. The Injury already done to the Community by this infamous Opinion, *viz.* that the most abandon'd Profligates will be all, to a Man, finally saved, is apparent from the Encrease of most, and the Commission of some Crimes, which till within these few Years were seldom heard of in this Kingdom. For whoever will give himself the Trouble to look back into the public Executions of the three preceeding Years, will find not only a surprizing Encrease thereof, but that the Crimes, which brought many of the poor deluded Wretches to an ignominious Death, were big with the most complicated Guilt; Crimes of such a shocking Nature, that ordinary Felony has been almost overlooked as, comparatively speaking, a small Trespass to the Community. And what may farther excite both our Pity and our Astonishment, even the most abandon'd Delinquents meet their Fate at the Gallows, with the utmost Degree of Chearfulness; and plunge into Eternity with as much seeming Intrepidity, as if they were suffering Martyrdom in the glorious Cause of Virtue and *true* Religion. Now from what poisonous Source can these monstrous Evils spring, or what can possibly be the Cause of such a sudden Encrease of every sort of atrocious Villanies? For as no People were ever known to become Wise and Good
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in a Moment, without some wondrous Miracle of divine Grace, so as true it is that no Set of Men can become outrageously Wicked * at once, without being strangely infatuated with some very deep Mystery of Iniquity. And the Observation is very just, that no National Disorders † become epidemical by mere Accident. These must all have their Causes; and such Causes must be adequate to the Effects which they produce. Now what other Cause can be assigned for this rapid Progress of Vice, which like a sweeping Inundation has all at once rush'd in upon the Land, but that new "Consolatory System" (for so the modest and pious Editor styles it) which asserts that the most impious and harden'd Murderers, Traitors, Blasphemers, Adulterers, and all other outrageous Sinners, (not so much as excepting any one single Soul, that "does or "shall hereafter live upon the Earth:" (these are the Man's own Words) shall, the very Moment they leave this World, enter into everlasting Glory. This, I think, is a Cause not only adequate to the Production of these enormous Vices; but will nourish the hideous Monsters to such a gigantic Size as to devour the whole Nation, unless the State speedily interposes its Authority by lopping off the Hydra Heads. It

* *Nemo repente fuit turpissimus.*

Juv. Sat. II. Lin. 83.

† Mr FIELDING on the Interposition of Providence, &c. Pag. 2.

It is impossible in the very Nature of Things for any Government long to subsist, after Vice begins to be openly established upon Principle. When the People are once made believe they may continue in the most shocking Crimes, even to the Hour of Death, that they may rob, murder, blaspheme, and at last cut their own Throats, and then be received into the Regions of Glory, this damnable Error (for such, without Breach of Charity, this may be pronounced) would quickly end in such a Scene of Things as makes Nature shudder at the very Thoughts of. And should this Opinion become universal, there would soon be an utter End of the human Species: For if Death introduces all Men without Distinction into the Joys of Paradise, the most happy (the greatest worldly Bliss being all nothing to those Joys that are uninterrupted, always new, and always encreasing) would wish for Death, and the Miserable and Afflicted would rashly embrace it as a final End of all their Sorrows. — Neither does the Author of this Opinion at all mend the Matter by his ridiculous and far-fetch'd Salvos. He has no other possible Way of evading those Passages in Scripture which, in Terms the most express that Language is capable of, utterly overthrow his “ Consolatory System,” than by substituting a double Redemption, the last of which he calls a *superabundant* Redemption, answering to a *superabundant* Grace, which (the Reader will excuse

excuse me) is the most superabundant Non-sense that ever dropt from any Mortal out of *Bedlam*. And of the same Stamp is his Vindication of his new System, which he modestly calls "a Source of Comfort for all Men in General;" and (as if this was not saying enough, he farther adds) "for every one in Particular." He seems to have been well aware how fatally his Consolatory System would take off one of the strongest Motives to the Obedience of the Divine Laws, and therefore this wondrous Empiric has invented a Sort of mock Succedaneum: He knew full well that, according to his impious Hypothesis, there could be no such Thing as the Fear of the Lord among disingenuous Minds; and therefore having destroy'd this first Step to Wisdom, he was under a Necessity of substituting something else in its Stead. And therefore after he has, like the impudent Impostors in the noble Science of Medicine, harangued the open-mouth'd Populace in describing the Virtues of that infallible Panacea he is going to put into their Hands, he assures his Readers, that the Treasure he presents them with will be productive of every possible Good, and guard them from every Evil, real or imaginary. And having bespoke the Prejudice of his Readers by the most fulsome Titles of "My honoured and my much honoured Brethren," (see the *Dedication*) he bids them take Courage, and cast away that
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idle, foolish and servile Principle of Fear of the Lord, since, whatever God may threaten his Creatures, it is all nothing but mere empty unmeaning Menaces; for, to his certain Knowledge, God never intends to punish so much as one single individual Sinner, be his Crimes what they will, or how often soever repeated.

This Man draws a very different Conclusion from that adorable Attribute of God's Mercy than what has hitherto been thought of: The general Opinion has been, that as Mercy is with God, He is upon that Account an Object of Fear, as well as of Love. And indeed it seems very natural, and but reasonable that we should fear that tremendous Being who is the sole and great Dispenser of Mercy, and who alone hath Power to save and to destroy, to shew Mercy, or to execute Vengeance.— But this Theological Quack talks in a more lofty Stile, he is for utterly banishing what the great Master of human Nature calls the *Beginning of Wisdom*, and leads his Disciples to the End and Perfection of it all at once. And this Love of God which is, I presume, not attainable to Perfection till that rapturous Moment when we shall be admitted to the glorious Vision of the great Object of it, he assures his Readers, it would be the Product of his new System, if they will but swallow it down heartily. But the Author of this strange Hypothesis, seems to have been as ignorant of the human System, as of the Nature
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of Man's Redemption. Man, in his present lapsed Condition, is not to be kept within the Bounds of Duty, without alarming his Fears, as well as enlivening his Hopes; and though Fear is without all Peradventure a very slavish fordid Passion, yet if we once utterly banish this Passion out of the human Mind, it is easy to conceive to what enormous Excess of Wickedness the Generality of Men would run. — Disingenuous Minds, which are, I fear, not a few, would never think of observing the Divine Laws, if they were not a little apprehensive of being one Time or other called to a severe Account for their Neglect. Rewards and Punishments are universally allowed to be the two great Sanctions of Divine Laws; and take whether of the two you will away, you leave these Laws on that Side open, defenceless and exposed. If we deprive Religion of her generous and inviting Sanction, and snatch that glorious Diadem of eternal Felicity out of her right Hand, she will never be able to win Men over effectually to her Service, with those temporal Rewards of Riches and Honour which she displays in her Left. For notwithstanding the Ways of this lovely Queen, Virtue, Wisdom, Religion, or by whatever divine Title we call her, *are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace*, yet this is a Truth known only to such Men as have travelled in the glorious Path; it is a very arduous Task to prevail with others, who are utter Strangers to
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Virtue, to quit the pleasing enchanted Road of Vice, and to turn into Virtue's Paths, which at first will seem a little crooked and intricate to the lazy supine Sinner. Religion must assure her Votaries of some other, and more solid Joys, as a sure Reward of their Obedience to her Mandates, than those which fall to the good Man's Lot in this present unequal State of Things. For though it has been so often insisted upon, that "Virtue is its own Reward," yet more have said it, than seem, by their Conduct, to have thought it. For it is to be feared, that no very considerable Numbers would sincerely espouse the Cause of Virtue, *præmia si tollas*. For notwithstanding this blooming celestial Virgin has native Charms enow to attract the Eyes of all Beholders, yet if she brings no Dower in her Hand, her mercenary Admirers soon look upon her with a cool indifferent Aspect. But then these temporal Rewards of Virtue being, as Things generally happen in this present State, neither equally distributed, nor in themselves great enough to engage the Bulk of Mankind in her Interest, hence it is that the Sanction of future Eternal Happiness becomes absolutely necessary, in order to encourage all God's Creatures to Obedience, by holding out a glorious Diadem, in Comparison of which, the greatest earthly Empire is a mere contemptible Bubble. Indeed this Sanction of the Divine Law Men are not all averse to; for as it
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is so much for their Interest, so they are the more readily disposed to believe it. But then, though Men will allow it to be very reasonable in the Supreme Being to reward his Creatures as much as he pleases, though they think the most consummate Bliss, is no more than what their *little Services* may well demand, yet they wont agree that the most atrocious Impieties, a thousand Times repeated, boasted of, and persevered in to the very Minute of Death, can make the Delinquent an Object of the other Sanction of God's Laws, (*viz.*) Future eternal Misery. For that there is a Set of hardned invincible Wretches, who not only commit the most enormous Crimes, but even glory and triumph in their Guilt to the last, is a Fact too notorious; and still the Author of "Heaven open to all Men, &c." is not afraid to tell the World, That all these incorrigible Wretches shall, the Moment they die, enter into eternal Glory. The national Mischiefs which this infernal Opinion has produced in the Space of the three preceeding Years (it being, as well as I remember, so long since "Heaven open, &c." was made public) are felt by many, and acknowledged by all. But what is pretty extraordinary, though the fatal Effects of inculcating such a destructive Opinion are seen, acknowledged, and lamented, not only by private Persons, but by the great Legislature itself; yet no Enquiry, that I know of, has been made concerning

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cerning the Cause of such a sudden Encrease of Immorality, nor any Remedy proposed in order to prevent the deadly Contagion from spreading any farther. That none of the great Personages in Church or State have ever seen the pernicious Book that has so visibly hurt the Morals of the People, is, as I have already observed, not to be supposed: And I apprehend the chief Reason why none of those Gentlemen who have read it, have thought it worth their while to give any public Answer to this impious Collection of Blasphemy and Nonsense, might be on a Presumption that the Notion advanced in it was too gross, and too big with Absurdities to make any considerable Number of Proselytes. Indeed, from the Surface of the Thing, so any reasonable Man would conclude; and to every Scholar, or sensible Reader, this poisonous Book brings its own Antidote along with it: But had these Gentlemen been pleased to recollect, how many Readers there are of a different Complexion, Men who will greedily swallow down the grossest Blasphemy, and the most palpable Nonsense that presents them with some darling Principle, upon which they may go on in Vice without any unmannerly Checks of Conscience; and had they withal considered, that the Pamphlet we are speaking of, is purely adapted to the Taste and Genius of such Readers, then I am persuaded some of our learned Advocates of Religion would, before
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this time, have obliged the World with a full Confutation of a pretended System, which, if suffered to advance, will, in the very Nature of Things, be the utter Subversion of the State. But as no public Notice, at least that I ever heard of, has been yet taken of this destructive System, I have presented the World with the following Work, in which the tremendous Sanction is placed in so full a Light, as does not, I humbly trust in God, either abuse his Mercy or injure his Justice. These are two most dangerous Errors, being the Scylla and Charybdis that environ the awful Subject; and great Caution is required, lest by over studiously endeavouring to avoid the one, we be not inadvertently swallowed up in the other. And what makes Men so liable to fall into one or other of these Errors, some injuring the divine Justice, others God's darling Attribute, is owing, I am persuaded, in some measure, to Mens different Complexions. A Man of a choleric vindictive Temper, is apt to describe the Almighty as a Being most rigorously Just, and most severely exact to mark, and to punish whatever is done amiss. And on the other Hand, a Person of an easy, compassionate, and forgiving Disposition, who the more he is injured, the more he is yielding, will represent the Deity all Forbearance and Long-suffering; a Being whose Mercy is too great to punish, and too vast and boundless not to be eternally extended, even to such

Objects as continue to the last to slight and abuse it. Now both these Errors are greatly injurious to the Divine Being, and in their consequence productive of many fatal Mischiefs to the Cause of Virtue and sound Religion. And though the last is apt to bespeak our Prejudice, as proceeding from a more amiable Disposition, yet it would be childish, not to say worse, in a Matter of such infinite Importance, to give way to an Error, because it is the Result of a mistaken Tendernefs. All Errors are, if possible, to be carefully avoided, and none are so likely to spread and ensnare, as those which are seemingly the Effect of a humane and compassionate Disposition. But let Errors proceed from whom, or whatever Cause they will, it is the Part of every prudent Man to guard against them, and to take more than ordinary Caution, how he gives credit to any Thing which puts on a fair outside Appearance in order to deceive the Credulous and Unwary. Of this very Stamp is that smooth "Consolatory System," which assures all the Descendants of *Adam* that they shall be eternally happy without Exception, and without any one Condition of Obedience and Good Works. To give any particular Answer to this new System, by following the Author through every impious Passage, I deemed an Undertaking infinitely beneath me: For as such a particular Answer would have subjected one to have dealt very largely in Quota-
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tions out of this infamous Tract, it would consequently, by this means, have been detailing out this Man's impious Absurdities abroad into the World : And in all probability this Author's Objections against the tremendous Sanction, would have been remembered with great Care, while the Answers, though ever so pertinent, would have been easily forgotten. Instead therefore of presenting the World with a particular Answer to this hopeful " Consolatory System," I have gone as far as I was able, to the Bottom of this awful Subject. I have shewn not only the Certainty, but even the absolute Necessity of the tremendous Sanction, as to some *particular Objects*, though I trust in the Author of Mercy, these Objects of eternal Wrath are not so numerous as fiery vindictive Zealots have all along supposed them. And as the commonly received Opinion concerning the great Number of the Damned, has brought the very Doctrine itself into utter discredit, I have endeavoured in the following Work to clear up this intricate and most interesting Affair : I have made it my most serious and most diligent Study, to set the tremendous Doctrine in its proper Light, so as to secure it from the Abuse of the furious Zealot on the one Hand, and the avowed Contempt and Disbelief of the Infidel on the other. I have, unless I am a very Stranger to my own Heart, which God knows is no new Thing, steered with the most con-

scientific Steadiness and Circumspection, between those two adorable Attributes of God, his Mercy and his Justice. I have in no one Instance, that I know of, magnified the one, (a Practice too common) at the Expence of the other. Or if, peradventure, I may have unwarily tript in this dangerous slippery Path, I am persuaded it has never been to the least Diminution of the darling Attribute. I have all along asserted the divine Mercy in its greatest Latitude; and for my own, and every Sinner's Sake, I wish God's Mercy as extensive as the most forgiving, tender, and compassionate Mind can possibly paint it. Neither am I altogether sure, whether, from the Light in which I have represented the divine Mercy, I shall not draw upon myself the most bitter Outcries of all those gloomy vindictive People, who are more actuated by an ignorant outrageous Zeal, than by the true Spirit of Candor and universal Benevolence. But I shall give myself very little Uneasiness about the groundless Censures of these furious Inquisitors. I have been long since convinced, that Ignorance and Zeal are one Thing, and Truth and genuine Christianity another. Genuine Christianity is what I have all along, in the ensuing Tract, most carefully endeavoured to keep in my Eye. And that I have not misrepresented it in any essential or material Point, I the rather hope, because to my sincere Endeavours have been joined repeated Applications to the Author of
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all Wisdom, that He would not suffer me to advance any one single Notion to the Injury of Truth, and of our most holy Religion, as founded in the sacred Oracles, and free from the base heterogeneous Mixtures of human Inventions. And as I have for some Years studiously kept aloof from the Crowd and Bustle of the World, I have thereby been better enabled to see what passed in it, and perhaps a little more at leisure for Thought and Reflection, than those Gentlemen who are always engaged in the midst of the Throng. But let not the Reader from hence conceive any Prejudice against me, as if I was by Nature gloomy, and a *Recluse* through Inclination: This is a Charge of which, I am persuaded, my intimate Acquaintance will very readily acquit me. And were I only to consult what is most pleasant and most agreeable to my own natural Inclinations, I would never omit one single Opportunity of joining in sweet Society with my fellow Creatures. But then, when I began to recollect, that the great Employment in which I had most solemnly engaged was not a mere empty, unmeaning Profession, but a Science, and a Science too that absolutely requires an intimate Acquaintance with many others, and a general Knowledge of all, I was soon convinced that no Time was to be lost by a Man of a Profession that, in its full Extent, takes in almost every Branch of human Learning. For though it is no Sort of Defect in

the Gentlemen of the long Robe to be ignorant of Astronomy, nor any Impeachment upon the Judgment of the Physician, because he may be entirely unacquainted with the Law of Nations, yet if the Divine has not a general Knowledge in these, and every other Branch of useful Literature, he will never be able to comprehend the true Import of several Passages in the sacred Code, much less to explain the Scriptures to the unlearned, and least of all to defend them against the studied Objections of those little Demi-Philosophers, which, as a very * judicious Divine has lately observed,—

“ They are ever ready to throw out; pleasing
 “ themselves that they have discovered in the
 “ Scriptures some Inconsistencies with the pre-
 “ sent Systems, and from thence arguing
 “ against their divine Original.”

I should not have made this Digression (if such it should be deemed) but in order to obviate some very fatal Mistakes, which are equally dangerous to the State as well as to the Church. One is, that absurd Opinion that God will always defend his own Religion, and secure it from the Attacks of all its Adversaries, without the Aid and Assistance of human Learning. This I am confident is more than God has any where been pleased to declare; or if he has, it would be disingenuously tempting the Almighty, by laying him perpetually under a
 Necessity

* Dr Jenner, in his Sermon at the Consecration of the Bishop of St Davids, January 28. 1753.

Necessity of miraculously interposing in the
 Preservation and Defence of his Religion, that
 the Professors and public Advocates of Christi-
 anity might be under no Sort of Necessity of
 studying the sacred Oracles, in order to under-
 stand, explain, and defend the great interest-
 ing truths of revealed Religion. We are in-
 deed assured by divine Authority, that there
 will, even to the final Dissolution of the
 World, be a visible Christian Church, and that
 neither the Subtilty nor Malice of impious
 Men, nor all the united Force of evil Spirits,
 shall ever be able to prevail against it: But it is
 no where said, either by Christ or his Apostles,
 that this visible Church shall always remain in
 this, or that particular Country or Nation. The
 Author of Christianity has left us no Assurance
 that his Church shall always be visible in *Eng-
 land, France, or Italy*. This divine Candle-
 stick has, it is too notorious, been often re-
 moved from one Nation to another; and in
 those Countries where the Gospel was first
 planted, there is, God knows, little more left
 of pure Christianity, than the unmeaning Title.
 And notwithstanding it is yet the Happiness of
Britain to have the free Enjoyment of the Gos-
 pel, and perhaps the nearest in Purity to the
 primitive Standard of any other visible Part of
 the Christian Church, still who dare affirm that
 Providence will always continue to this Land
 the pure Light of the Gospel, without the In-
 tervention of human Learning, or any other
 rational

rational Means, whereby to secure our most holy Faith from the refined Subtilty, and Malice of its most inveterate Opposers? And equally ridiculous is that vulgar Error, which asserts, That so long as the Church continues to be supported by the State, and supplied with fixed yearly Stipends, and ample Revenues for the Maintenance of its Ministers, so long she will triumph against all her Adversaries, and never want a regular Succession of Men to espouse her Interest. There is indeed little Doubt to be made, but that so long as the Church can amply provide for its Ministers, so long there will be Men at all Times ready enough to thrust themselves into her Service. And it is much to be lamented, that the Church is not provided with more ample Stipends than she is, or at least that it is not practicable for her to distribute her Emoluments in some such more equitable Proportions, as not to suffer Numbers to starve that are daily engaged in her Service, while others are greedily monopolizing her Favours, that they may *roll along Life in Ease and Indolence uninterrupted*. But still, were it possible for the Church to gratify all her Ministers with the most affluent Subsistence, it is much to be doubted whether this would not, at long Run, turn out to her Disadvantage, or at best it would make very little for the Interest of sound Religion. It is frequently one Thing to promote the Cause of the Church, and

and another to advance the Interest of genuine Christianity. And though it is impossible, humanly speaking, for the Church to subsist without the Support and Protection of the State, yet were the State to endow the Church with ten times the Revenues she is at present possessed of, it is much to be feared whether this would be attended with any lasting Advantage to the Cause of Christianity, much less would it, as is pretended, set the Church above all Danger. We need not look back many Centuries for a convincing Proof to the contrary; and we are taught from the Conduct of the Ecclesiasticks of those Times, that the greatest Affluence and Power in the Church, cannot bear its Ministers out, or prevent them from utter Ruin. The public Advocates of Christianity must call in some other Aids, besides those of Wealth and Power, if they mean to secure either themselves, or the Religion they teach, from Ridicule and Contempt. And as it is a rude and impious Affront against Heaven, and utterly shutting Providence out of the World, to suppose that the Church can never be in any great Danger so long as it has the Protection of the State, so on the other Hand, to maintain that God will always defend the Church, without the Intervention of any human Aids whatsoever, is tempting of Providence, and basely betraying the Cause we are in Conscience, Interest, and Duty obliged to defend.

And

And there is another very common Mistake concerning Christianity, to the full as dangerous as those already mentioned, *viz.* that our most holy Religion will always defend itself, and wants no other Advocates to plead her Cause, but her own native Purity and Excellence. To be sure Christianity, as such, is well able to defend itself, and wants nothing to recommend it to the Approbation of all Men, but its own great intrinsic Merits. But when we consider how often Christianity is, by its avowed Enemies, misrepresented, and by its pretended Friends corrupted with human Inventions, does not our holy Religion, upon this Account, stand in need of a regular Succession of able and sincere Advocates, to assert and defend her genuine Doctrines, to shew the World which are, and which are not necessary Articles of the Christian Faith, what those Duties are which this Religion lays the greatest Stress upon, and by this Means to contradistinguish the primitive Truths of the Gospel, from those various Corruptions which, from Time to Time, have been foisted into the Christian Church by over-officious and designing Men? And when these Matters are seriously consider'd, we shall be fully convinced that Christianity, ever since it was deprived of miraculous Attestations, has need of all the Aids its Advocates can administer, in order to secure it from the various Attacks of evil-minded and disputatious Men. Nor can any
 Thing

Thing so fatally betray the Cause of Truth, as the mistaken Construction of that common Adage, *Magna est Veritas, & prævalebit*, from whence it is concluded, that Truth being so irresistibly great and powerful, it must, and will always prevail. But alas! if we expect to see Truth victorious, we must shift the Scene, and attend this celestial Virgin to those divine Abodes from whence she derives her fair Original; for it is too well known, that in this World she is frequently Brow-beaten, oppressed, and vanquished. Hence therefore it is evident, that the Cause of Truth, or Christianity, being indeed both the same, must, as Matters stand at present, be supported by some other Arguments than those which result from the Consideration of the Practice of Christianity being, in itself, productive of Mens temporal Happiness. For though it is an easy Matter to prove, that it is every Man's present Interest to close in with Virtue and Religion, on Account of the many temporal Advantages generally attending a virtuous Life, yet it is too notorious how little Effect any Arguments drawn from this Quarter can produce in loose and disingenuous Minds. Neither can Numbers of Men be reclaimed from Vice, though they both see, and even feel by woful Experience, the sad Train of Miseries inseparably annexed to a wicked dissolute Life. And least of all are we enabled to reclaim the World, by taking into the Argument those future Joys
which

which are most assuredly laid up in Store for the greatest of Sinners, that will but forsake the Error of their Ways, and, in Time, sincerely return unto their heavenly Father, in unfeigned Humility and Contrition of Soul. Neither have all these Arguments in favour of Virtue, received much additional Strength (I mean with respect to the unthinking and dissolute Part of Mankind) from the repeated Interpositions of Providence, so eminently display'd in all Ages, in its Approbation of Virtue, and Abhorrence of Vice. For notwithstanding the Supreme Being, (as will appear in the ensuing Treatise) has given so many Instances of this Kind, has tried to win upon his Creatures by all these united Arguments, and repeated a thousand Times over every possible temporary Expedient to reclaim the harden'd Offender, yet there have been, in all Ages of the World, and now are, some People of such invincible Perverseness, as to be deaf to every Call. God's Justice they utterly defy, and his Mercy they for ever abuse: And by so doing they reduce the Almighty to this unavoidable *Dilemma*, either to have recourse to eternal Torments, since all temporary Punishments are ineffectual, or else to suffer his darling Attribute to be slighted and abused to all Eternity. For I know of no Alternative, but that of the invincible Sinner's total Annihilation, the Absurdity of which strange Notion will be shewn in its proper Place.

So

So that upon the Result of this Matter we must be convinced, that there are some such unhappy obstinate Minds, as are no other Ways to be awaken'd and roused from the fatal Pillow of Sin and Voluptuousness, than by alarming their Fears, and by urging such Arguments as Men cannot possibly be deaf to, unless they have utterly cancell'd the primary Laws of Nature, *viz.* Self-Preservation, Abhorrence of Pain, and the inbred Love and Tenderness for their own Frame. Here then the *tremendous Sanction* steps in to the Support of the Divine Laws, and by this *Terror of the Lord*, the Advocates of Christianity are both alarm'd themselves, and more powerfully enabled to awaken and reclaim the most secure and unthinking Sinner. This Argument, as the Reader is well apprized, is the Subject of the following Work: And I believe he will find it all along pursued under proper Restrictions, the Truth of it freely debated, and the various Objections fully stated, and briefly answer'd. And that I might not be thought, by the Opposers of Revealed Religion, to have paid too servile a Regard to a *Book* which so much offends them, I have not rested the Proofs of the tremendous Doctrine wholly upon those particular Passages in Scripture where this awful Truth is revealed; but I have also deduced the Necessity of this Doctrine from a great Variety of Facts, and shewn from the Conduct of human Nature, in different Ages of the World, that there have been

been some Men proof against every *temporary* Expedient which infinite Wisdom could devise. I am however well aware that the Opposers of this Doctrine will be ready enough to say, that these, many of them, are only Facts recorded in the *Bible*, and that the History of that stubborn People the *Jews*, is nothing to the Purpose. Well, as to the Facts related in the *Bible*, I hope they are not to be rejected purely upon that Account. Surely the sacred Code may claim the common Privilege of other historical Writings, especially if its Authenticity can be as fully proved. And to imagine that the History of the *Jews* is nothing to the Purpose, is something pretty extraordinary, because whoever will attentively consider the History of this People, will find it not only an historical Narrative of that particular Race of Men, but a true prophetick Description of the invincible Perverseness of human Nature in all after-Ages. And the Reader of the *Jewish* Story, whoever he is, must be more obstinately blind than the *Jews* themselves, if in their *Stubbornness* he cannot discover a true Picture of some harden'd and irreclaimable Christians. And as God was pleased to select the *Jews* out of the Rest of Mankind, so one, amongst many other wise Reasons for so doing, was in them to try as it were Experiments upon human Nature, in order to convince both the *Jews*, and all after-Ages which should read their History, that

that there may be Men of such incorrigible Stubbornness, as not to be reclaimed by any Expedient which even Omnipotence itself can make use of in this *present Life*. And therefore is not *this* at least a negative Demonstration, that these Men must be Objects of some future Punishments? And as to these future Torments, whatever they may be in Kind, or in Greatness, still if they should be once wholly remitted, it is much to be feared whether the Objects of them would not again abuse the divine Mercy, after they found the Rod of correcting Justice was once laid down. But as this is so fully debated in the Course of this Subject, it may not be so proper to anticipate. Nor would I have trespassed so long upon my Readers Patience in this *Introductory Discourse*, only to give them a general Notion of the following Treatise, and of the great Importance of the Subject to the very Existence of the State as well as the Church.

I once had Thoughts of taking into my Argument, as an additional Weight, the Sentiments of profane Writers; for it is an easy Matter to prove from Pagan Theology that the Torments of the Damned were supposed eternal. For that this was the generally received Opinion (whatever might be the private Sentiments of some double dealing Men, who taught one thing and believed another) is evident, I think, from the very Imagery under which the Sufferings of the Wicked are all

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along painted. Who does not see the eternity of future Torments plainly figured out in those various Descriptions which the Pagan Writers have given of these Tortures? What less, for Instance, than an eternal Duration can be meant by the Punishment of *Sisyphus*, and that of the cruel Sisters? *Sisyphus*, we are told, was to have no Intermission, till he could make a smooth * round Ball stand still upon a steep inclined Plain; nor the *Danaids* find the least Respite, till they had filled a † perforated Hoghead with Water; both which Tasks, it is well known, are, in the very Nature of Things, absolutely impossible. But as some sort of Men would have looked upon all these corroborating Proofs as mere Fable and Poetic Fiction, I was determined, upon more mature Deliberation, to borrow very little from Pagan Theology; lest, perchance, by calling in the assistance of Heathen Mythology, I might seem to distrust a much better Authority, and, in so doing, give a Handle to the Opposers of the

* *Non exuperabile saxum.*

VIRG. GEOR. III. Lin. 39.

If the Reader is at Leisure to consult the XIth of *Hommer's Odyssey*, he will find such a Description of *Sisyphus* his incessant Labour, as will make him imagine he hears the Stone tumbling down the hideous Precipice, and sees the poor breathless Wretch forced to renew the endless Toil with weary Limbs and panting Heart.

† *Et Danaï proles Veneris quod numina læsit,
In cava Lethæas dolia portat aquas.*

TIBULL. Lib. I. Elog. 3.

the tremendous Doctrine, as if it could be no other Ways proved, than by being beholden to the Authority of Heathen Writers and Poetical Fables. In order therefore to guard against this Exception, I have quitted my first Design; and I hope my doing so will be no Disappointment to any of my Readers, unless those Gentlemen who like to see every Page in an Author garnished with the perpetual Flowers and Ever-greens of *Greece* and *Italy*, though they have passed through so many Hands, as to have lost, in a great Measure, their original Fragrancy. And that the Subject of the tremendous Sanction might not be wholly disregarded by the polite Reader, upon a Supposition of its Gloominess, I have thrown it into a kind of historical Form, and ranged it in such a Manner, as not to require such a rigid and uninterrupted Attention throughout the whole, but what one Section only, may be read at a Time, without any absolute Necessity of going to the next. Every particular Section is, in one Sense, a kind of separate Discourse, having either an Argument or Illustration distinct from the rest, and naturally arising from those historical Facts which it recites.

And throughout the whole Progress of this historical Narrative, one Rule is carefully observed, *viz.* never to confound the sacred Story, by applying to all the Descendants of *Adam* what is only meant of some. From the Banishment of *Cain*, the World was di-

vided into two distinct Houses, which unhappy Division continued in all succeeding Ages. And upon this Account it will be impossible to understand the sacred History, without carefully distinguishing betwixt these opposite Houses. Accordingly, I have all along kept this Distinction in view. The two original Houses were those of *Seth* and *Cain*. In the first, religious Worship of the true God, was, for a long Time, very faithfully retained. The other either had no Sort of Religion at all, or at best it was fatally corrupted: These two Houses continued till the general Deluge, when the abandoned House of *Cain* was utterly destroyed, not so much as one single Soul surviving the hideous Ruin. The House of *Seth* still survived in *Noah*; but immediately after the Flood there was a sad Defection in the House of *Seth*, as preserved in *Noah*, by one of *Noah*'s own Family, that Monster of Profaneness, wicked *Ham*. And as before the Flood the impious Descendants of *Cain* were always at Enmity with the true Believers in the House of *Seth*; so *Ham*, after the utter Extinction of the House of *Cain* by the Deluge, revived the Quarrel, and with the most impious and inveterate Hatred put himself at the Head of a Party in Opposition to his venerable Father. Afterwards, the two Houses were that of *Shem*, in the Line of *Heber*, from whom *Abraham* descended; and that of *Canaan*, the Son of wicked *Ham*. The House
of

of *Shem*, in the Line of *Heber*, faithfully preserved a Sense of true Religion, and paid divine Honours to none but the one supreme God, at least not till a little before *Abraham's* Separation. After *Abraham* was called out of *Haran*, the Worshippers of the true God are to be reckoned in *Abraham's* House; and the *Hebrews*, (Descendants of *Heber* in the Line of *Abraham*,) became a select People, and different from all other Nations under Heaven. From thence the World was, (when speaking of Religion,) divided into Worshippers of the living God, and blind Adorers of dumb Idols. The first confined to the *Hebrews*, afterwards called *Jews*, in contradistinction to the *Gentile* or Heathen World, in which Idolatry became as it were the established Religion. From *Abraham* to the Time of *Rehoboam*, the *Jews* may be considered as one entire House; in which, though there were frequently very hot Contentions, yet it was not absolutely rent in two till the Reign of *Rehoboam*, when ten Tribes fell off to *Jeroboam* the Son of *Nebat*. From thence forward there were two separate Kingdoms in the Land of *Palestine*: One in the House of *David*, the other in the House of *Jeroboam*, till *Baasha* of the House of *Issachar* conspired against *Nadab* his Son* at "*Gibbethon*," slew him, and reigned in his stead." The *Jews* then, upon the Revolt of the ten Tribes from the House of *David*, are not only to be considered

* 1 Kings XV. 27, 28.

considered as a Nation distinct from all others, both in Religion and Polity, but as two separate Houses or Kingdoms, and frequently at War with each other. And unless we carefully distinguish betwixt the Kings of *Judah* and those of *Israel*, and diligently compare the Chronicles of one with those of the other, we shall neither be able to trace out the Line of the Messiah, that great conquering * *Lion* of the Tribe of *Judah*, nor to form any tolerable Judgment upon the true Import of several historical Passages in the sacred Story. And as it is evident that, upon the Banishment of *Cain*, the World was divided into two different Parties, quite opposite to each other both in Religious and Civil Matters, so unless we most diligently keep this Distinction of the two great Lines in view, viz. that of the Messiah from the House of *Seth* down to *Noah*, from him to *Abraham*, from *Abraham* to holy *David*, and from thence downwards; and the other in the Line of Anti-Christ, as we may not improperly stile it, from *Cain* to the general Deluge; from thence revived in impious *Ham*, and from him extended to the *Canaanites* and other idolatrous Nations; unless, I say, this Distinction be most carefully observed, we shall unavoidably confound the Sense of the sacred Volume, and run headlong into many great Absurdities, not to say dangerous Mistakes. And it seems to have been owing to this

* See *Gen.* XLIX.

this Oversight, that some Commentators of the Bible have run into several palpable Blunders. I shall only mention one upon *St Peter*, Epist. II. Chap. ii. Verse 5. where, in order to account for *Noah's* being the eighth person *inter sectatores justitiæ*, *Adam* is excluded *ob transgressionem*, and *Lamech* *ob duplex homicidium*, not considering that this * *Lamech* the Homicide was in the Line of *Cain*, and quite a different Person from the other † *Lamech* in the House of *Seth*, who was the Father of *Noah* and a Prophet. This Mistake the ‡ Author of the *Synopsis* quotes out of *Zegerius*; and what is most surprising is, that this confounding the two *Lamechs* should escape the Notice of so discerning a Critic as *Pool* most undoubtedly was. But that I might not err in this Point, I have, throughout the historical Part of the following Treatise, carefully distinguished between the Line of the Messiah and that from the House of *Cain*, that my Readers might all along know what Company they were in; and that being beforehand apprized of the different Complexions of the two opposite Parties, they might thereby be enabled to form a better Judgment upon the Subject laid before them. For as the Offering which I here make to the Public is upon a Subject of the most solemn and interesting Nature, I thought it my Duty

* See *Gen. III. 16, 17, 18.*

† *Gen. V. 25, 26, 27.*

‡ Vide *Syn. Crit. Vol. V. Page 1559.*

to introduce it into the World in the clearest Light I was able, and more especially so, since an avowed Disbelief of the tremendous Doctrine is said to be daily gaining Ground in this Nation. Nor need we much wonder at the Matter, till those Writers are silenced who roundly deny the tremendous Sanction, and tempt the People to commit the most shocking Crimes by impudently assuring them no Harm can come of it. Till therefore this destructive Opinion is removed, it will be in vain for the Church to *preach*, or the State to punish. The Exhortations of one will be ridiculed, and the Punishments of the other defied; because if capital, so much the better for the Delinquent, forasmuch as he will thereby be rid of a miserable Life, and sent at once into the Regions of eternal Happiness. To what Purpose then will it be, to exhort Men to forsake their Crimes in order to avoid that future Punishment denounced against impenitent Sinners, when they are made to believe that there is no such Thing in Nature, but that, on the contrary, eternal Happiness will be the sure Lot of all Men.

This is the Treatment Divinity meets with at present, this is the Construction put upon that pure and most holy Religion, which is meant to make Men first virtuous, and then, but not before, to reward them with eternal Felicity. I am persuaded that if such Indignity was offered against the other two public Professions,

Professions, as Theology (and I may justly add Virtue and good Sense) receives from the foregoing Assertion, the worthy and learned Members of each would soon exert a commendable Zeal in the just Defence of their respective Sciences. For suppose the Gentlemen learned in the Law, after they had spent all their Labours and Study in clearly stating and explaining the Meaning of penal Laws in general, shewing the absolute Necessity of capital Punishments for such and such Offences, with the great Utility of these capital Punishments to the Community; suppose, I say, that after all this, some little Pettifogger should tell them, they might as well have saved themselves all this needless Trouble, for to his certain Knowledge, the Legislature meant nothing by enacting those Laws, and that the Sovereign never intended to put one of them in Execution, would they not be fired with a just Indignation at such a false and impudent Assertion? Nor can I think, but that the other learned Body of Men, the College of Physicians, would, all to a Man, condemn that ignorant Empiric to *Bedlam*, who should pretend to confute Doctor *Mead's* Treatise on Poisons, by confidently asserting there was no such Thing as Poison of any Quality throughout the whole Mass of Matter. But Religion daily receives the rudest Indignities, and Virtue is hissed and laughed at, while the Wretches who do it are applauded and caressed.

I have but one Thing more to apprise my Readers of, which is, that whatever is advanced in the following Treatise, is supposed to be addressed to Gentlemen who allow of first Principles, by which I mean such Principles as, by a due Application of Reason, are common to all Men; amongst which I would rank these following, *viz.* The Existence of one eternal Being, the great first Cause of all Things; and that this great Supreme, not only sits at the Helm of his Creation, but that he also inspects into the Conduct of all his *accountable* Creatures, and interposes whenever he sees fit in the Government and Direction of human Affairs.

As to any Faults which the Reader may meet with in the Performance of the following Work, such as needless Repetitions, want of Connection, and perhaps many other Inaccuracies, I flatter myself he will look over these Defects with Candor, when he is acquainted that the Author has the Care of a very large Parish wholly upon himself. For as this must of course subject one to many Interruptions and unavoidable Avocations, it is hoped this will in some Measure atone for such Imperfections as may have escaped my own Notice. The Subject of this Work is of the last Importance; and as it is debated, if I know myself, with Freedom, Candor, and Sincerity, I beg of the great Searcher of Hearts, that it may be read with the same Spirit. And should it,

it, through the kind Influence of Heaven, prove the happy Instrument of promoting the sinking Cause of Virtue and sound Religion, my End will be answered in making it public, and my Bosom will ever heave with Delight to think that I did so.

The END of the INTRODUCTION.



A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

*I*N order to obviate an Objection which will, in all Probability, be made to this "INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE" appearing in Public, unaccompanied by that Work to which it more than once refers, and speaks of it as of a Treatise already printed; let the Reader be pleased to Notice, that it was at first my full Design to publish the whole Work (consisting of Four Books, with a short Discussion of that most striking Quere
of

of Maximus, πῶθεν τὸ κακὸν) together; but that when I came to recollect how unpopular a Subject (though one of the last Importance) I had engaged in, I was willing, upon more mature Deliberation, to try what Reception the Public would please to give to my "INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE," before I gave any express Directions to my Printer how many Copies of the "TREMENDOUS SANCTION Impartially Debated, &c." he should work off: And I hope no reasonable Person will condemn my Caution. For I am clearly persuaded, that every sensible candid Man will think it enough for a Person in a private Station to devote his Time alone to the Service of Religion, and consequently to the true Interest of the State, without ruining his little Fortunes into the Bargain. I am determined, however, to have a small Number of Copies of "The TREMENDOUS SANCTION, &c." printed off at all Adventures: The First Book (containing a Survey of Human Nature in some of the most interesting Events, from the Formation of Adam down to the general Deluge) will be published next Month; and the other Three, with the Discussion, with all convenient Expedition.

St Neots, Huntingdonshire,
May 15, 1753.

J. M.

